MOHAMMED SALAMEH'S MENTOR, BY JUDITH MILLER

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OPERATION HEALTH CARE

Robert Wright • John B. Judis • Mickey Kaus

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

HMOphobia

When I was 25, I lived in San Francisco and enrolled in a large "health maintenance organization." I'm afraid the relationship ended badly. At the time, I was experiencing bouts of fatigue—it seemed as if I was sleeping for ten or twelve hours a day. (This was before anybody had ever heard of "chronic fatigue syndrome" or "yuppie flu.") I was given a few standard tests at the central clinic, and then assigned to a rather unemotional doctor with a Germanic accent. After some questions, he pronounced his diagnosis: "Mr. Kaus, *zere is nussink physically* wrong viz you."

I haven't enrolled in an HMO since. I would have been happy, I decided, to spend more money, get more tests and have a chance at a more helpful result. And this for an illness that wasn't life-threatening. If my actual existence were at risk, I would want even more. On page 25 of this issue, my colleague Robert Wright asks who among us would pay $1,000 for a brain scan if the chances were one in a thousand that it would reveal a problem. I know somebody who might. Keep taking one in a thousand risks, I figure, and pretty soon your number might come up.

This attitude may explain the slight disorientation I feel listening to Democrats prepare the political battlefield for health care reform. We are told, in outraged tones, that the United States spends 14 percent of its gross domestic product on health care. Unless we act quickly, that figure will rise to 20 percent by the end of the decade. Meanwhile, Britain and Japan spent only 6 percent of their GDP on health in 1990. Germany spent 8 percent.

There is a moralistic undercurrent to all this, as if spending large sums on health care was in itself a sign of national decadence. Alain C. Enthoven, a Stanford health care reformer (see "Whose Managed Competition?" by John B. Judis, page 20), boasts that his scheme will reverse the malignant rise in medicine's share of the economy: "It is altogether possible that a very efficient competitive system could get us back to 9 or 10 percent [of GDP]." The unstated premise seems to be that there would be something inherently wrong with spending 20 percent.

This premise remains unstated, of course, because if it were stated it would be obvious that it is wrong. One of the things people do as they get older and more prosperous is spend more time and money taking care of their physical well-being. As with individuals, so with nations. Young, poor nations worry less about health and pollution and more about generating wealth. But as nations grow richer, their citizens can afford to trade some of their affluence for longer lives. Economists have long documented a correlation between national prosperity and the share of GDP spent on health. You would expect the United States, as the richest nation, to spend the most.

Actually, you would expect the United States to spend even more than that, thanks to cultural factors. In Britain, I'm told, conspicuous concern about one's health is still viewed as vaguely namby-pamby. In Japan there is a taboo about telling patients they have cancer, which translates into a fatalistic tendency to treat the disease less aggressively. But America is different. If we are sick, we stay home. If we have cancer, we try to beat it.

Most of the national health systems so admired by American policy nerds are inexpensive partly because they provide less care than what Americans would find appropriate. Malcolm Gladwell of *The Washington Post* reports that the Washington, D.C., area has about thirty-five magnetic resonance imagers —diagnostic machines that cost $2 million apiece. Toronto, a city of similar size, has only five. As Gladwell points out, this means Canadian doctors often use a cheaper procedure, the myelogram, which requires spinal injections and can cause splitting headaches and seizures. Who needs that?

Or take AIDS treatment. Many of the newest anti-AIDS drugs, such as DDC, are difficult to get in European countries. "There are people who fly over here to simply get prescriptions filled for drugs that have been standard here for two years," notes Dr. Jerome Groopman, a Harvard Medical School professor (and frequent TNR contributor), who sees many such patients. Offering elaborate treatment to AIDS sufferers—people who have a terminal illness—can be conceived as a waste of resources, especially if it doesn't increase life expectancy. But it can also prevent crippling discomfort and blindness. "Is it important to have a 27-year-old person who is dying live happily for a year?" asks Groopman. It doesn't reflect badly on us if we answer "yes."

The alternative uses of our resources are not necessarily more noble. Which is the worthier choice: spending $15,000 to make somebody's life bearable for a few months, or spending $15,000 on a Mazda Miata? Yes, as Wright points out, the flaw in our system is precisely that it doesn't force us to confront such choices. Untaxed, employer-paid health insurance, in particular, insulates us from the cost of ordering up fancy new medical technologies. But even if all the inefficiency were wrung out of the system, and consumers were forced to make the relevant trade-offs, they would probably choose to spend a large and ever increasing income share on health care.

A crucial question, of course, is whether the trade-offs will be made at the individual or collective level. In Canada society makes the call, and medical worrywarts can't buy expensive extra procedures even if they're ready to pay for them. That avoids a stratified system in which the rich buy better care than the poor. It is this egalitarian aspect of Canadian health care, I think—more than its cost-controlling potential—that rightly appeals to Democrats.

But will Americans really support a system that prohibits them from choosing to buy more care? Probably not. In most "managed competition" schemes, consumers will be offered a menu of health plans. Everyone will get a basic benefit package, subsidized by the government if necessary. But I'll be able to spend more to sign up with the local Better-Safe-Than-Sorry Health Group, which doesn't stint on MRIs.

The trick, if you value the egalitarian aspects of Canada's plan, will be to keep to a minimum—say, to 10 percent of the population—the number of rich or risk-averse Americans who "opt out" of the basic system. That probably means slapping them with a tax disincentive. But it also means that the basic package has to be generous enough to attract the vast majority of Americans. Egalitarianism, in other words, may also require us to abandon the moralistic antipathy to rising health expenditures.

Robert Reischauer, head of the Congressional Budget Office, notes that big shifts in spending patterns are nothing new or inherently troubling. From 1965 to 1990, for example, the share of consumer income spent on air travel grew two-and-a-half times. People flew more. Was that a bad thing? During the same period, spending on health care doubled. If, a few decades after Clinton's reform, it has doubled again, that won't necessarily be a bad thing either.

MICKEY KAUS

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CORRESPONDENCE

Kelly's cuts

To the editors:

Ken Cummins's article "Prattfall" (February 8), regarding Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly's two-year administration, is a good example of why elected officials choose unfiltered means of communicating directly with the public. The article was replete with errors and distortions.

The biggest error was the description of the mayor's successful work force downsizing. Mayor Kelly promised during her campaign to reduce the size of the large D.C. government bureaucracy by 1,200 to 2,000 employees. Using a combination of humane early retirements and 345 outright firings, some 1,619 employees were removed from the payroll. In order to buttress his misguided premise, Cummins indicated that many of the laid-off employees have been hired back after winning legal challenges. In fact, *none* of the downsized employees have won their appeals to be reinstated to their positions.

And while we are dealing with the author's inaccuracies and half-truths, the readers should also know the author blew it on the following issues:

The mayor's office does not have a living quarters, and the public has been welcomed to the building and her office through several holiday parties and ongoing "open houses."

Mayor Kelly admires President Clinton's perseverance and courage throughout his campaign, particularly when he was savaged by the media. In fact, the two have swapped stories about the latter issue. Both clearly understand they cannot solely depend on the media to get their messages to the public.

VADA MANAGER
Press Secretary, Executive Office
Government of the District of Columbia
Washington, D.C.

Ken Cummins replies:

Manager is a master at the game of semantics that political spokesmen adore. One, many of the workers Kelly fired were offered city jobs, either at their old agency or at other agencies, after filing legal challenges but before the challenges could be decided. Two, other workers won their legal challenges, but the city has appealed those rulings, and the tangled appeals process could take years. So, technically, no employee has yet gotten his job back by court order. This must be the basis for the statement that "none" of the fired employees has won on appeal, because no other interpretation makes sense. Three, the mayor's penthouse on the top floor of her new City Hall remains off-limits to reporters and the public. Manager insists that the penthouse "command center" is still under construction and won't be any more lavish than the command centers outfitted for other big city mayors. Four, it is touching that Kelly and Clinton have exchanged tales about their problems with the press. During the campaign, Clinton aides used to spin tales about Kelly's bizarre behavior toward their boss. Her coolness toward Clinton in the primaries is well documented.

No problem

To the editors:

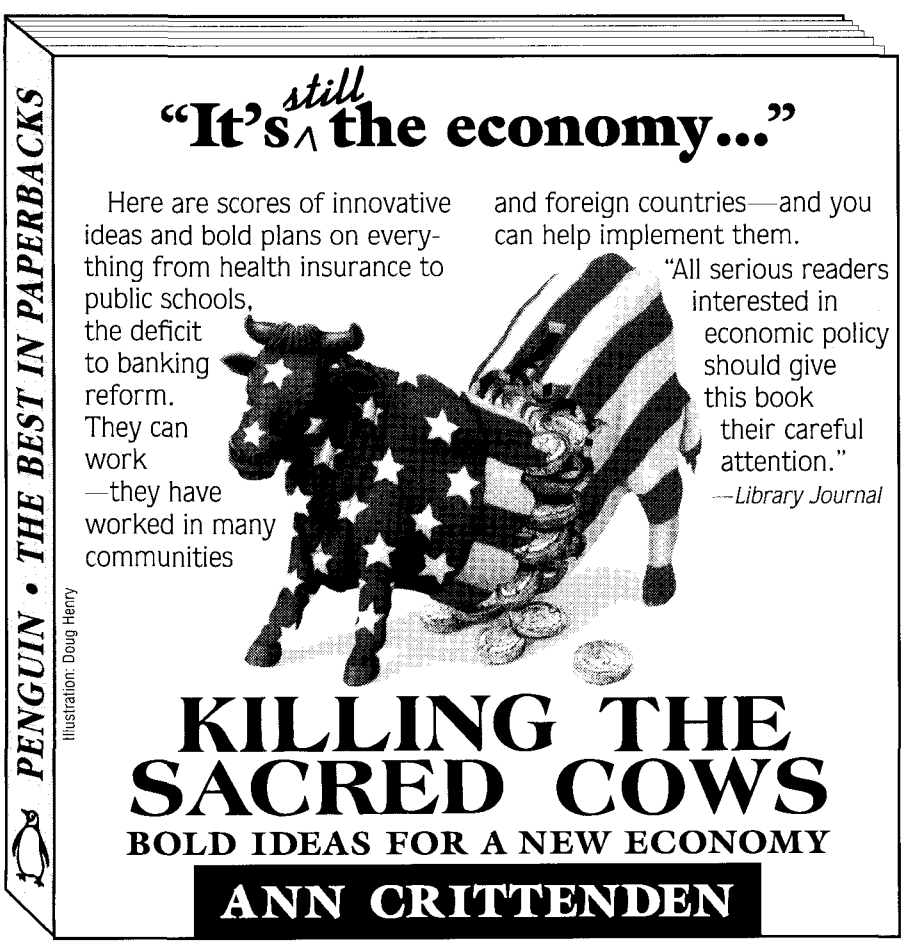
Eric Konigsberg's essay on wealthy celebrities' use of personal servants to insulate themselves from the mundane aspects of daily living ("No Hassle," March 1) raises an important issue about democratic culture but fails to make clear that such celebrities are to be pitied, not envied. Konigsberg should take a look at Hegel's account of the dialectic of master and servant in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (or perhaps at Diderot's play *Jacques and His Master*, which has a similar theme). Hegel presents a startling reversal of roles in which a "master" like Daryl Hall, who cannot or will not even pour his own glass of water, becomes so increasingly isolated from practical reality that it is he who needs his servant, not the other way around. The mundane aspects of daily living are a "reality check" that helps to keep one's sense of self from becoming bloated and twisted. Once this check is removed, it is little wonder that so many celebrities become pathetic caricatures of themselves. They are to be pitied, not envied.

ERIC SPONHEIM
Iowa City, Iowa

To the editors:

Eric Konigsberg's essay is quite simply the silliest thing I have ever read. He proclaims hassle avoidance "a particular threat to the notion of a democratic culture." If Timothy Leary's patronage of Dial-A-Wife or Demi Moore's employment of a personal hairstylist is so grave a threat to our country that it merits a TNR cover story, then we're obviously in very solid shape. It's this sort of reflexive class resentment that serves, in part, to give us liberals a bad name.

MICHAEL J. CONNOR
Palo Alto, California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To the editors:
If Mike Tyson did indeed have a newly minted U.S. Passport issued to him by a harried bureaucrat of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the offices of Illinois Senator Alan Dixon in Chicago, it must have taken a circuitous route to get there. U.S. passports are issued not by the INS, but by the Passport Agency, an arm of the Department of State.

WARREN CARLSON
Glen Ridge, New Jersey

Doing woman

To the editors:
Alex Ross misses the true contribution that *The Crying Game* makes to contemporary discussions of sex, gender and sexuality ("Crying Shame," March 1). The character of Dil shows us that anatomical sex can be detached from gender and that sex need not serve as the origin and foundation of gender. Why is this significant? It exposes the arbitrary, constructed, contingent nature of gender. As the feminist philosopher Judith Butler argues, gender is not what we are, but what we do. While it is true that in "doing woman" Dil reinforces cultural gender norms, she also forces us to see gender as a performance, thus undermining our assumption that it constitutes the fundamental truth of who we are. Although it is important for moviemakers to produce positive images of gays and lesbians, I believe exposing gender as a social construction is far more interesting.

KAREN STRUENING
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Not alone

To the editors:
James Traub's article about Derrick Bell stated that his deanship of the Oregon Law School from 1981 to 1985 remains the only instance of a black person serving as dean of a non-black law school ("For Whom Bell Tolls," March 1). This is erroneous. Marilyn Yarbrough served as dean of Tennessee Law School from 1987 to 1991 and Daniel Bernstine has been dean of Wisconsin Law School from 1990 to the present. Both are well-known black members of legal academia, and neither Tennessee nor Wisconsin is considered a "black law school."

GERALD J. THAIN
Law School
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Madison, Wisconsin

Check-out

To the editors:
The lost bookstores of Roger Rosenblatt's youth were probably done in by the daily visits of real life Ali Babas, whose gangs have gotten much bigger over time (New York Diarist, "Stranded," March 1). Theft is a major problem for bookstores all over New York City, and shiny gates and a few guys in uniform are an unfortunate cost of doing business. Having checked my share of bags at the Strand, I can assure Mr. Rosenblatt, if it be any consolation, that it is a task unmatched for drudgery and charmlessness.

I hope that Mr. Rosenblatt doesn't wait another twenty-five years to visit the Strand. He sounds obstreperous enough to be a regular.

EDWARD F. SUTTON
New York, New York

Quiet labor

To the editors:
Fred Barnes correctly points out that labor union membership has declined as a percentage of the work force and that 36 percent of union members now work for the government ("Hard Labor," February 22). This has transformed organized labor from the representative of working-class interests into a lobby for more government at all levels.

Barnes, however, misses a major payoff to labor union leaders when he dismisses as "small stuff" the rescinding of President Bush's April 1992 executive order that would have begun to implement the rights of unionized Americans spelled out in the Supreme Court's *Beck* decision of 1988. In *Beck* the Court ruled 7-2 that union members can ask for and receive back that portion of their dues used for the negotiation and maintenance of their collective bargaining agreements.

In the case of the Communications Workers of America, the union sued by Harry Beck and others, 80 percent of the dues taken from the membership was available for rebate. With average dues in the United States of $500 per worker per year, an 80 percent rebate would return $400 to each unionized worker and would strip hundreds of millions from AFL-CIO coffers. Hardly "small stuff."

President Clinton himself telegraphed the importance of this change by having the press office announce the change late in the day, after the press was told there would be no more news. You don't hide the unimportant.

What union leaders "contributed" to help elect Clinton they have already been paid back, and then some.

GROVER G. NORQUIST
Americans for Tax Reform
Washington, D.C.

Social contract

To the editors:
Mickey Kaus's TRB column "COLA Fizzle" (March 1) presented Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's views dishonestly. He wrote that "the main argument against means-testing is that it would destroy political support for Social Security." That's not the full truth. Those who pay into the Social Security system have a social contract with the government; contributors will receive benefits from the system if they retire, become disabled or widowed. Moynihan argued on "This Week with David Brinkley" that if you means-test Social Security you abandon the social contract. However, the contract and not the political fallout remains the issue. Kaus might not agree with the idea that Social Security is a social contract. That's O.K.; but he shouldn't misrepresent Moynihan's argument.

Personally, I think greedy geezers who have high incomes should pay a 100 percent tax on their benefits. Still, either a 100 percent or 85 percent tax will preserve the social contract. Also, Moynihan deserves credit both for reminding us of the original intention of Social Security as a social contract and for remaining flexible on taxing Social Security benefits.

ROBERT E. SHIMKOSKI JR.
Detroit, Michigan

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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For years, America's health care system has been broken. It has left millions without care, wasted our money and bankrupted too many families.

Millions of Americans can't afford health insurance and millions more lack coverage for needed health benefits. Families everywhere face the financial devastation of long-term care and the high cost of prescription drugs. We all have to deal with skyrocketing costs and the frustration of being unable to do much about it.

The new administration is now taking important strides toward comprehensive reform of our health care system. We share this goal, and we are dedicated to helping it be realized for everyone, regardless of age, income, or disability.

We look forward to working with Congress and the administration to enact health care reform, including long-term care, this year. We simply can't afford to wait any longer.

AARP

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 29, 1993

THE BOMB THREAT

"Good terrorist help is hard to find," noted *Newsweek*, facetiously equating, as many did, events in Waco with the terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center. The mass media, showing its habitual contempt for religion, conflated Islam with the most bizarre of modern cults and treated the two as almost interchangeable. In fact, the Texas massacre was a mere exercise in cult anthropology; the New York bombing, for all its amateurism, was a deadly warning about the security of much of the country.

Bloody phenomena are not, of course, synonymous with Islamic fundamentalism. Blood is also shed casually in India and Ireland, in Sri Lanka and the Balkans. And the World Trade Center bombing should not be an occasion for stereotyping that makes Muslim children in this country afraid to go to school or embarrassed to turn on the tube. Most pious Muslims, Arab and non-Arab, are mortified by what is often done in the name of the Koran. But the bombing should be occasion to recognize that the violent habits of the Middle East are gradually slipping across our borders. A car bomb is not yet a routine fact of life in America as it is in Beirut. Still, it is undeniable that a culture of incitement has emerged amid the hard-working and law-abiding Arab immigrant population in this country. The fact is, even eminent secular Arab intellectuals are among the inciters, at least against other Arab intellectuals who are politically heterodox and ideologically wayward.

But contracts are put out by Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who, although he was on the State Department's list of terrorists to keep out, was given an entry visa and permanent resident status. Rahman is not the most subtle theologian. "Hit hard," he told his acolytes, "and kill the enemies of God in every spot to rid it of the descendants of apes and pigs fed at the tables of Zionism, communism and imperialism." On the day of the New York bombing, Rahman's faithful claimed credit for an atrocity in Cairo in which four innocents were killed.

He has struck in America before. El Sayyid A. Nosair, who is in jail on gun charges relating to the assassination in 1990 of the religious chauvinist Meir Kahane, was, like Mohammed A. Salameh, a worshiper in Rahman's mosques. Jews made little of Nosair's acquittal for murder because many of them either felt glad to be rid of a great embarrassment or thought that Kahane actually deserved what he got. But political assassination should send shivers down our spines.

Israeli intelligence tried to alert U.S. authorities to the migration of terrorists and their supporters. But American officials thought these alerts were alarmist. The FBI was clearly caught in a bind: it should not put mosques under surveillance casually, lest it violate civil liberties. But some mosques were not just spiritual institutions. Investigators have found in three Jersey City locations enough chemicals and electronic components to tell us the World Trade Center was meant only as the beginning of a long terrorist debauch. This is a glimpse of what Israel lives with every day, and helps explain why it put 400 of these men across the border into Lebanon.

Why do these extremists come to the abode of the Great Satan? One reason is surely that they wish to live in a tolerant society. Even Salameh, an illegal immigrant whose family had passports provided by the Sandinistas, has been read his rights and provided with an attorney. In Algeria—in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, too—he would have been tortured until he confessed. According to Israeli intelligence, the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas has centers in Illinois and Virginia, where it coordinates terror throughout the Middle East. In the United States, terrorists can escape the surveillance that impedes their activities in Israel. They should no longer. It is possible, if difficult, to distinguish between religious organizations and terrorist cells.

What must be ignored is the literature of exculpation and explanation that is already emerging. Sa'ad Abu Khalil, a scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington, for example, patiently enumerated for *The New York Times* the reasons for the bombing: "You can't belittle the extent to which Muslims were furious about the Gulf war ... the cancellation of the elections last year in Algeria to the indifference, if not the outright acquiescence, of the West ... the perceived indifference of the West to the plight of Muslims in Bosnia ... the continuing plight of the Palestinians." Since Salameh is a Palestinian Arab born in 1967, the year of the colossal humiliation, "the continuing plight" of his cousins will be the favored excuse: he is depraved because he was deprived. Americans may not ask immigrants to forget their grievances. But they are entitled to expect that these grievances not be fought out on American streets. •

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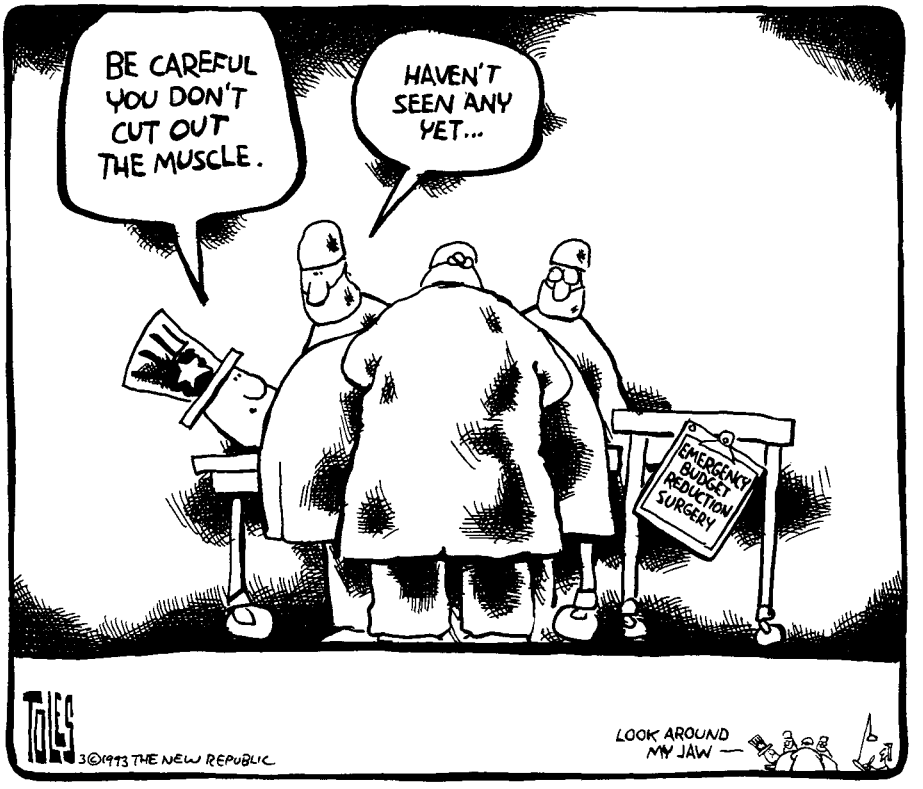
NOTEBOOK

THREE CHEERS FOR CONGRESS: Jaded Washingtonians haven't quite processed the magnitude of the change Bill Clinton seems to have brought with him. Through the Reagan-Bush years, tax and budget proposals had a habit of degenerating into unwholesome bidding wars, where members of Congress would agree to lend their support in exchange for protection of their own pet programs or an additional morsel of pork. Since Clinton announced his economic program last month, however, Congress has been overtaken by a kind of bidding war in reverse. House Republicans have been falling over each other with proposals for deeper cuts; and congressional Democrats, no less, are demanding that Clinton cut more billions from the budget in exchange for their support. When we argued for this in our editorial two weeks ago (see "So Near, So Far," March 15), we thought it was a faint hope. Somehow it happened. In response to the Congressional Budget Office's estimate that his plan didn't quite add up, Clinton has agreed to an additional $55 billion in spending reductions. And Democrats on the House Budget Committee want even more. On March 8 they voted unanimously asking for $63 billion. Jim Sasser, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, is asking for *$90 billion*. If this keeps up, these guys might just save the country.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CLINTON SUCK-UP WATCH: "With boundless energy and exuberance, Mr. Clinton has firmly seized the reins of government since taking office seven weeks ago. He has mastered issues ranging from the complexities of the federal budget to the Waco, Texas, standoff with an armed religious cult.... So far, Mr. Clinton is proving to be a far better chief executive than might have been expected on the basis of his sometimes haphazard campaign. Unlike George Bush, he has a clear vision of what he wants to do. Unlike Ronald Reagan, he possesses a true command of the details of his many initiatives. And unlike Jimmy Carter, he is a consummate politician." —Jeffrey H. Birnbaum in *The Wall Street Journal*, March 9

SPECIAL CHEMISTRY: What did the World Trade Center bombers use to cause such massive mayhem and destruction? The thick, black smoke suggests ANFO, the cheapest explosive in the world, and also the most readily available. As Russell Seitz of Harvard's Center for International Affairs points out, the active ingredient in ANFO is ammonium nitrate, a common fertilizer, which costs about $25 for 100 pounds and is available at most garden stores and nurseries, no questions asked. Short of restricting its purchase, Seitz points out that it would be easy enough to mix ammonium nitrate with enough other fertilizers, or inert filler, to preclude detonation. Bomb-makers would find it arduous to salvage the explosive stuff. It beats requiring background checks and waiting periods for zucchini growers.

P.C. OR NOT P.C.:

JERSEY CITY MAN IS CHARGED IN BOMBING OF TRADE CENTER AFTER RENTED VAN IS TRACED

—*The New York Times*, March 5, page 1

Muslim arrested in NYC bombing

—*The Washington Times*, March 5, page 1

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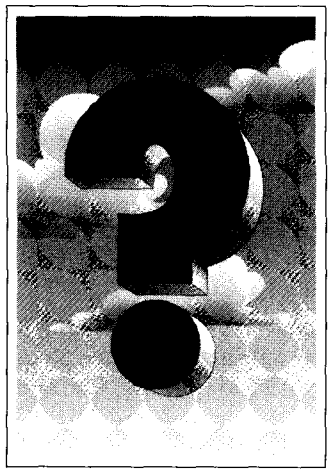

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MILLENNIUM CHART

Not so long ago, the millenium meant the Book of Revelation, pestilence, earthquakes and rapture. For David Koresh it still may. But lack of faith hasn't stopped other Americans from experiencing millennium frenzy. A brief exploration of what people might mean when they talk so feverishly about the end of the world.

When the end of the world occurs . . .

- There will be an explosion of fun; all boredom will end
- I will not have to live anymore trapped inside linear time; the concept of infinity will cease to be frightening
- I will be released from the daily grind of being myself
- There will be great destruction; structures like skyscrapers and multinational corporations will be destroyed. I will experience release because I will no longer have to live and work among these structures that I had no particular hand in creating anyway
- All secrets about everything will be revealed and I will have endless fun learning these secrets
- Animals will perish along with humans and I will no longer have to feel guilty that animals are somehow freer and purer than myself
- My dream life and my real life will fuse
- Those people I dislike and who disagreed with me will have their existences erased forever
- The existence of Something Large in which I can believe—that Something of which I am always on the brink of knowing but never quite do—will be both confirmed and revealed to me at last
- I will be judged and found not to be a bad person
- Freeways will experience many exciting and fiery car crashes
- All the merchandise in the world will be mine for free except I will be so busy enjoying myself watching the orgy-like spectacle of destruction that I will not want any of it
- Just before I become immaterial, my body will turn itself inside out and fall to the ground and cook like cheap steak on a hibachi and I will be released
- There will be much loud music
- All of the trappings of this brief life will be found to be arbitrary and fleeting
- I will meet celebrities and they will be forced to be my friend

DOUGLAS COUPLAND

ISTANBUL POSTCARD

BOSNAG

By Deborah Amos

Turkey's president, Turgut Ozal, says he wants to protect the Muslims of Bosnia. Selim Yusuf Oglu has a more modest goal. He wants to find temporary housing for the thousands of Muslim refugees who have been entering Turkey from Bosnia in the last year. In Oglu's small Istanbul office, crammed above a pastry shop that specializes in Balkan sweets, the refugees line up, waiting for an appointment. Two of them, a henna-haired beautician and her brother, a welder, are recent arrivals from Banja Luka, victims of "ethnic cleansing."

They wait nervously in folding chairs, the latest examples of how the Balkan crisis is not an easily containable conflict, but one whose consequences are spreading quickly. In Turkey the Serbs' anti-Muslim war provides fuel for an Islamic fundamentalist revival that could destabilize this strategically crucial and precariously secular country.

Oglu's office used to be a neighborhood association for Turks of Bosnian origin. But when the fighting started in the Balkans, Oglu suspended the folk dancing program and the space became a de facto refugee center. Refugees smoke cigarettes and watch a football game on television. No one says much as the commentator gives a frantic rundown in a language they don't understand. A bronze bust of Kemal Atatürk, the president who shaped a secular republic out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, is the only decoration in the room.

Oglu's own family immigrated twenty years ago from a village on the Serbian Bosnian border. Ogla calls himself a "Bosnack," part of the large community of Muslim immigrants who have been settling in Turkey since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, and who now may number 4 million. Other figures show that as many as 10 million of Turkey's population of 60 million are descendents of Balkan Turks and Muslims. In the past few months Bosnack groups have been active in lobbying the government to take a more aggressive stand on the Bosnian crisis and have sharpened the country's outrage over Serbian atrocities.

"Let me ask you something," says Oglu. "If these terrible things were being done to Christians, would the world react in the same way?" Asked if he's a religious Muslim, he laughs, "I go to the bar and I go to the mosque, and I don't neglect either one of them. That's the way Bosnacks are."

Most Turks are proud of their secularism; they

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believe that saving the Bosnian Muslims means saving themselves. The Bosnians are more than just cultural kin: they're European Muslims, Westernized, moderate—how many Turks see themselves. But there are other forces in the country that have been quick to exploit the religious implications of the Balkan atrocities. "Today, Bosnia is an internal problem. Even the politicians are afraid of it," says Oglu. "It's very dangerous to divide people who are Muslims from non-Muslims. It strengthens the fundamentalists' ideas."

"Do the fundamentalists come here?" I ask. "We're not radicals and everybody knows it," he says. "We won't take their money; we're Atatürkists here."

Turkey's Welfare Party was the first to recognize the power of the Bosnian issue. The party is the most "Islamic" in Turkey's secular political spectrum. Party leader Necmettin Erbakan has spent two decades campaigning for an Islamic revival. In 1991 Welfare Party candidates polled sixty-two out of 450 seats in Parliament. The party has done well not simply because it addresses the problems of the displaced rural Turks who are streaming into the cities, but because of the organizational skills of young, committed activists who have lost faith in the left and see the future in Islam.

In Parliament the Balkan crisis was a boon to the Welfare Party's strategy. Party members demanded government action to stop the slaughter of Muslims and collected money to bring convoys of refugees to Turkey. Erbakan said he was doing whatever was necessary to stop the atrocities, including sending guns and volunteers.

This tactic makes Turkey's elites extremely uneasy. Ozal and Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel have pursued an enlightened strategy of allying with Washington and the West. The current crisis in the Balkans, with its wave of public outrage, is making this position increasingly unpopular. Ozal has been publicly critical of the Vance-Owen plan, calling it unworkable and unfair. The government's official position calls for an end to the U.N. arms embargo against Bosnia; however, Ozal and Demirel support the use of force only under the umbrella of the U.N. or NATO, at odds with Iran's call for Islamic intervention.

The elites try to defuse the religious undercurrent of the conflict by pointing to the secularism of the Bosnian Muslims. "The Iranians know the Bosnians will never be fundamentalists," a professional at the Foreign Ministry says with some disgust. "These Bosnians are more secular than us!... We support them because they are Ottomans, not because they are Muslims."

As reality intrudes, however, these kinds of arguments are wearing thin. The guest house at the Ministry of Transportation has been turned into a rehabilitation center for thirty-eight Bosnian men. One man had stepped on a mine; a plastic leg with shoe and sock is propped up on the wall next to his bed. A young Turkish doctor tends to their needs, the kind of professional one would think to be the least susceptible to religious loyalties. "A lot of people think this is a Christian Muslim war," she says in a quiet, nervous voice.

And there are signs that Ozal himself is adjusting. Recently a peculiar coalition of religious Bosnian solidarity groups, fundamentalist organizations and extreme nationalists held a rally in Taksim square. Other political parties boycotted the rally, but Ozal showed. He looked out over a crowd spotted with extremist placards. "The Grey Wolves to Bosnia," read one, referring to Turkey's extreme right-wing secular nationalists. "Bosnia Will Not Be A Second Andalusia," read others, an allusion to the Christian reconquest of Spain 500 years ago—the ethnic cleansing of a flourishing Muslim civilization.

When Ozal told the crowd that Turkey was a secular country, there was a stony silence. When he spoke about Muslim solidarity, cheers erupted. The Bosnian Muslims were engaged in a heroic struggle, he said, one that would result in the miracle of a new Muslim nation's appearing on the stage of history. After Ozal left the rally, a procession marched out of the square and smashed the windows at the offices of Yugoslav airlines, Olympic airlines and El-Al.

DEBORAH AMOS, London bureau chief for National Public Radio, is the author of *Lines in the Sand: Desert Storm and the Remaking of the Arab World* (Simon and Schuster).

Sexual harassment—by tots.

ROMPER ROOM

By Ruth Shalit

Sue Sattel, sex-equity specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education, has an open-and-shut case of sexual harassment on her hands. "He led her into the art resource room," she says. "He pulled her pants down. He pulled his own pants down. He jumped on top of her. And he began simulating sexual intercourse." Never mind that both harasser and victim are 5 years old. "Something very, very serious is going to happen to that little boy," says Sattel.

Bernice Sandler of Washington's Center for Women Policy Studies, who wrote the first report on kiddie sexual harassment, has similarly harrowing stories. "I was conducting a workshop the other day, and afterward, a second-grade girl turned to a classmate and said, 'You know, you sexually harassed me the other day when you threw me to the ground and tickled me.' 'But you laughed,' he said. 'I know, but I didn't like it,' she said. Now, you have to ask, what is this boy doing, throwing girls to the ground? This happens to be a sexual offense in New York, and in most states. She labeled the behavior correctly."

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Having transformed the consciousness of the adult world, sexual harassment activists are beginning to tackle the playground. And they don't like what they see. "Name-calling," says Nan Stein of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women. "Girls being pinched and grabbed. Notes being passed. The playground act of de-pantsing. Boys-grab-the-private-parts-of-the-girl week. Dangling." Dangling? "Boys lifting up younger boys so that their underpants dig into the testicles. It's very painful for children."

California State Senator Gary K. Hart feels their pain. And he thinks he's got the perfect remedy. A new state law sponsored by his office would punish those responsible. S.B. 1930, which went into effect January 1, seeks to end sexual harassment by children by allowing school administrators to discipline offenders with the harshest penalty allowable: expulsion from school.

California's law defines peer-to-peer sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical, visual or verbal actions of a sexual nature" that are severe enough "to have a negative impact upon an individual's academic performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment." Dangling, de-pantsing and bra-snapping aren't the only offending rituals. "Flipping—sometimes called skirting—is unfortunately a tradition in some elementary schools," Hart says. "Boys flip up little girls' skirts. This can occur in a pre-adolescent situation. It's terribly embarrassing and humiliating."

Hart's law is child's play compared with a Minnesota statute that took effect in September 1991. California's law covers only children in the fourth grade and up, allowing the under-10s time to sow their wild oats. Minnesota's anti-sexual harassment law, however, covers all children, right down to kindergartners. "We don't believe that anyone should be exempt from the range of discipline available to correct the situation," says Sattel.

A list of "Examples of Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment" published by the Minnesota Department of Education provides a glimpse into what the playground patrol has in mind:

> sexual gestures, for example, boys grabbing their groin when a girl passes by
> students "rating" other students
> students teasing other students about body development, either overdevelopment or underdevelopment
> males bragging about or indicating the size of their penis

Sattel and other proponents of the Minnesota law say tough penalties for offenses like these are the wave of the future. "It started up with Hill/Thomas," says Ellen Vargyas of the National Women's Law Center. "Now we're being contacted by school districts for advice."

Yet some question the wisdom of applying adult sexual norms to children barely old enough to control their bladders. "Many grown-ups still have no idea what the concept of sexual harassment means, philosophically," says Diane Brahams of the California Parent-Teachers Association, which opposed Hart's bill. "Now we're holding accountable children as young as fourth grade." Brahams says the PTA lobbied to exempt fourth- and fifth-graders from the bill, but failed. Meanwhile, purists like Sattel say that if anything, California's effort is too lenient. "California is sending a message that it's O.K. for very little kids to sexually harrass each other," she says. "We think that any time a student is offended or scared, something serious should be done." Sattel says she "wouldn't be surprised" if California's law were challenged under Title IX of the Federal Education Act, which prohibits sex discrimination in schools. "Title IX protects kids from kindergarten through college," she says. "I'm not sure you can exempt anyone."

In a strange political bedfellowship, the American Civil Liberties Union joined the PTA in opposing the California bill. Margaret Pena of the California ACLU says that since principals already have the authority to discipline students who commit obscene acts, injure classmates or use habitual profanity, having separate laws for "sexual harassment" is unnecessary and confusing. "The language is very vague," she says. The scope of the law does indeed go beyond mere discipline of naughtiness, punishing students on the basis of visual and verbal "conduct" determined to be degrading or offensive. Unwelcome sexual advances are no more pardonable, activists say, coming out of the mouths of babes. "It's not just poophead jokes," insists Stein. "At age 7, it becomes 'bitch.' Regulating the verbal side of it is a very pro-social thing to do."

Reformers like Sattel see acts of "sexual violence," a term that encompasses ogling and grabbing, along a single continuum of oppression. "Serial killers tell interviewers they started sexually harassing at age 10, and got away with it," says Sattel. The bill's supporters argue that the transgressions of the playground both reflect and help constitute the oppressive sexual politics of our larger culture. "This is learned behavior, part of how men in this society treat women," says attorney Mary Jo McGrath, one of the bill's leading proponents. "People think this is natural."

Activists contend that the Supreme Court's 1992 decision in *Franklin* v. *Gwinett Public Schools*, which awarded monetary damages to a Georgia teen whose teacher forced sex on her, shows that Title IX's injunction against sex discrimination includes sexual harassment—and that school districts may be held liable. Supporters of children's anti-harassment laws see the potential to use that to their advantage. "The threat of money damages is a two-by-four that you can hit the institutions over the head with and get them to make the adjustment," says Vargyas, although even she finds the California and Minnesota laws "terribly punitive."

Of course, it doesn't necessarily follow that because schools are liable for a teacher raping a student, they

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are also liable for failing to protect her from playground wolf whistles. But Minnesota, for one, isn't taking any chances. During the 1991-92 school year, more than 1,000 children in Minneapolis alone were suspended or expelled on charges related to sexual harassment. •

Consumer groups vs. free trade.

NADER'S FADERS

By Steven Lagerfeld

You'd think America's ever vigilant consumer groups would be the first to trumpet the North American Free Trade Agreement and the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. With the American auto industry and other manufacturers lobbying Congress for dozens of new protectionist measures, consumer advocacy organizations would surely be fighting for more products and lower prices, right?

Oddly enough, for the most part they're not. In fact, the consumer group that has been most active in the recent battles over trade, Public Citizen, has organized a coalition including environmental, labor and animal-rights groups *against* GATT. Consumers Union, the venerable research and advocacy group that publishes *Consumer Reports*, is the only major consumer group on the free-trade side of the GATT fight. But GATT is about the extent of its interest, and it is not making a major effort to defend the agreement. (Consumers Union has not yet taken a position on NAFTA; Public Citizen opposes it in its present form.) On a host of lesser issues, such as Detroit's on-again, off-again quest to raise minivan prices more than $1,000 by boosting the tariff on imported Japanese minivans from 2.5 percent to 25 percent, the consumer movement is doing next to nothing. The one exception is Consumers for World Trade, but as a spokesperson explains, it "is not a mass-membership organization." In other words, it's heavily backed by business.

What accounts for the lack of lobbying? One reason is that consumers have many different interests, such as product safety and quality, apart from low prices and a broader selection of goods (the classic benefits of freer trade). Mark Silbergeld, director of the Washington office of Consumers Union, sighs when asked why his group isn't more active on trade issues. "There's just not enough time," he says, explaining that his staff of seven is spread thin. Lately, Consumers Union has been focusing on health care. *Consumer Reports*, with a circulation of 5 million, has occasionally run stories highlighting the costs of protectionism, but in Washington the group seems to spend little time on the issue.

The group that leads in obsessing about free trade is Public Citizen. As might be expected of a Ralph Nader offspring, Public Citizen has never shown much interest in keeping prices down. Product safety and allegations of corporate malfeasance have always been its top priorities. Its interest in trade grows out of alliances with labor and other liberal groups, and out of an increasing belief during the late 1970s that its issues were linked to international trade. What good is a domestic ban on DDT, for example, if the United States continues to import fruits and vegetables from countries that still use it?

Public Citizen's crusade took it down the protectionist road. Last April and again in December, it led a list of fifteen assorted groups—including the National Consumers League, Friends of the Earth and Citizens Trade Watch, a coalition of labor unions and other groups—that sponsored bizarre full-page anti-GATT ads in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Under the headline "SABOTAGE!" the ads warned that a new GATT agreement would give "a secretive foreign bureaucracy vast new powers to threaten American laws." They continued: "GATT represents a new blueprint *and* a new mechanism for the organization and control of resources and life on Earth, under the 'benevolent' guidance of bankers and multinational corporations. But in order to proceed with their vision, they must first eliminate the power of democracies to control their own laws."

The ads read like old John Birch Society texts, with the ominous references to fluoride and the Rockefellers merely updated. They warn that international food-safety standards would be set by a "mysterious unaccountable group, the Codex Alimentarius." The name does have a dreadful Gothic ring to it, but the English translation (not provided in the ads) is far less alarming: Food Code. In fact, as Consumers Union notes, the "mysterious" Codex Alimentarius Commission is a unit of the United Nations.

There is, however, a bit of truth to the allegations. The new GATT would make it easier for one nation to challenge another's food-safety or other standards if it believed that they were designed to restrict trade—as they sometimes are. But even if a case went against the United States, it would still be up to the government to decide if or how to revise the offending rule. Lori Wallach, who heads up Public Citizen's campaign, is not moved by such arguments. She rattles off a long list of complaints about the new GATT that, she says, represents "trade *über alles*."

Where does that leave American consumers? It's not as if they're not already paying a high price for protectionism. Gary Hufbauer, a visiting fellow at the Institute for International Economics, estimates that American trade barriers raised consumer prices by $53 billion in 1984. Hufbauer is updating his study and thinks it will show that the costs of protectionism have dropped slightly. Such estimates are extremely uncertain, but even if Hufbauer's is high, we're still talking about a significant amount of money.

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Part of the reason people aren't making a bigger fuss about protectionism is that it is hard to get consumers stirred up over price increases they can't see. Americans paid billions during the 1980s for the "voluntary" restraints that limit Japanese automobile imports. But car price stickers had no line that read, "cost of protecting U.S. industries that refused to adapt to changing markets." Moreover, costs are usually spread around. Even if the average consumer were aware of the thirty-five-cent-per-gallon tariff on frozen and reconstituted orange juice, it's not likely that he would rush home from the grocery store and write an angry letter to his congressman. Yet consumers may not be as oblivious as they seem. Worry about a consumer backlash reportedly was one of the reasons General Motors pulled out of Detroit's planned anti-dumping suit against Japanese automakers recently.

For much of the nineteenth century, business and the Republican Party lulled Americans into believing the protective tariff was "the workingman's friend," a painless source of revenue as well as a protector of jobs and high wages. Democrats knew better, but it took the shock of the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff to wake the country from its pleasant dreams. It's time someone gave us another nudge. Pity it won't be the consumer groups.

STEVEN LAGERFELD is deputy editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

COURT WATCH

LEMON LAW

By Jeffrey Rosen

Can the state of Arizona pay an interpreter to sign the rosary for James Zobrest, a deaf student at a Catholic high school? Zobrest's parents claim Arizona misinterpreted the religion clauses of the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof") when it decided to put sign language interpreters in secular, but not religious, private schools. At oral argument on February 24, the justices joked about their incoherent doctrine for policing the Establishment Clause and the embarrassing results it has produced. Adopted in a 1971 case called *Lemon* v. *Kurtzman*, the aptly named Lemon test forbids government actions that (1) have no secular purpose; (2) have a "primary effect" of advancing or inhibiting religion; or (3) foster an "excessive entanglement" between government and religion.

"Maybe it's time we tried to straighten out some of that," said William Rehnquist. "Be careful!" stage-whispered Byron White. The false ingenuousness of the exchange was cloying. For the past decade Rehnquist and White, now joined by Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, have been trying to scuttle the Lemon test for an alternative that would permit unabashed government support for religion, including school prayer. Their agenda has been swaddled in historical claims that have been thoroughly discredited by scholars. But there is a better alternative to the Lemon test, more deeply rooted in text and history, that would prohibit prayer in public schools while giving Zobrest the interpreter he seeks.

Under *Lemon*, courts must strike down government programs that have a "primary effect" on religious education. Now that private as well as public schools receive extensive government funds, this means that the state must discriminate against parochial schools when it distributes benefits. Thus, the Court has construed the Establishment Clause to require what the Free Exercise Clause forbids. To make things even more perverse, the Court subsequently decided that "primary effect" really means any "direct and immediate" effect: the state must be "certain" that parochial schools receiving government funds do not use them to promote religion. At the same time, the Court has interpreted the "entanglement" test to forbid the monitoring necessary to achieve this certainty. Thus the entanglement prong seems to forbid what the effect prong requires.

The Court's efforts to apply the Lemon test are even more absurd. Under *Lemon*, bus trips from home to religious school are constitutional, but bus trips from religious schools to local museums are unconstitutional. (The latter, but not the former, bring government too close to religion, according to the Court.) Standardized tests are O.K., but teacher-prepared tests are not. Government can provide parochial schools with books but not maps, provoking Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's quip: "What about atlases?" The Court has invoked *Lemon* to strike down a nativity scene surrounded by poinsettias and to uphold a nativity scene surrounded by elephants, teddy bears, Santa's workshop and a talking wishing well. This is the Court's idea of equal time for atheists; practitioners call it the "three plastic animals" rule.

If Zobrest's fate hangs on the Lemon test, the outcome is anyone's guess. The lower court's conclusion—that a publicly funded interpreter would create a "symbolic union" of church and state—is farfetched. The court relied on the fiction that students will know who pays for the interpreter, and will wrongly conclude that Arizona endorses the religious message. It would be just as plausible, Michael McConnell of the University of Chicago notes, for students to think that government is hostile to religion when it denies aid to parochial schools that is available to all other private and public schools.

The result for Zobrest, in the end, will turn on which line of inconsistent precedents the Court chooses to follow. Some Supreme Court cases say that state and federal

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aid to the handicapped can be used for religious education, as long as any benefits to parochial schools are the "incidental" result of private choices. Other cases say that whenever public funds are used for religious education, they impermissibly "advance religion." The justices must also wrestle with existential questions about whether a sign language interpreter is more like a hearing aid, which the Court has permitted, or a tape recorder, which the Court has prohibited.

If the Court chooses to re-examine *Lemon*—as seven of the nine justices have promised to do—then the question for Zobrest is which of the flawed alternatives can command a majority. (Thomas said in his confirmation hearings that he had "no quarrel" with *Lemon*; months later he joined a Scalia dissent calling for its "interment.") The most conservative justices have flirted with a view that Rehnquist, in a 1985 dissent, attributed to the framers of the First Amendment. In 1789, according to Rehnquist, "The Establishment Clause did not require governmental neutrality between religion and irreligion nor did it prohibit the government from providing nondiscriminatory aid to religion."

Of all the historical claims Rehnquist has floated to mask his conservative political agenda, his claims about religion have been the most thoroughly disproved. In 1986 Douglas Laycock of the University of Texas wrote a law review article and Leonard Levy of Claremont wrote a book responding to Rehnquist's claims. Meticulously reviewing the historical evidence, Laycock and Levy independently concluded that the ratifiers of the First Amendment intended to preserve neutrality between religion and irreligion. (Non-preferential language was proposed and rejected in favor of a more absolute ban prohibiting the federal government from promoting or discouraging religion in any way.) No serious scholar has challenged Laycock's and Levy's conclusions, and David Souter cited them in his school prayer concurrence last June. But Rehnquist, Scalia, White and Thomas have refused to answer the overwhelming evidence against them.

The more moderate justices have been less adept in agreeing on alternatives to *Lemon*. Anthony Kennedy proposed a test that would have prohibited government only from "coercing" citizens to support religion. Sandra Day O'Connor, who prefers mushy balancing tests, wants to ban government aid that "reasonable people" might perceive as "endorsements" of religion.

In *Zobrest*, the Court has the opportunity to cut the Gordian knot by replacing *Lemon* with the very test that Rehnquist rejected: neutrality. A neutrality test would be more faithful to constitutional text and history. It might get five votes from the moderate and liberal justices. And it would resurrect the principle that Justice Hugo Black identified in 1963 as the core value of the Establishment Clause. (Chief Justice Warren Burger mindlessly took the wrong catchphrase from Black's opinion when he cut and pasted the Lemon test.) But neutrality does not mean a wall of separation between church and state. Instead, it means that religion is to be left entirely to private choices.

A neutrality test would give appealingly clear answers to the most controversial questions of church and state. All government-sponsored crèches, menorahs and the like would be unconstitutional, with or without talking plastic garnishes. Vulgarity would be no substitute for neutrality. All prayer sponsored by public schools, similarly, would be forbidden, and there would be no need to resort to what Scalia called "psychology practiced by amateurs" to reach this unequivocal conclusion. Moments of silence, on the other hand, would be less suspect, as long as the teacher's introduction to the students is truly neutral. ("You have the right to remain silent," Leon Wieseltier suggests.) And students would be able to use state aid—including vouchers—in religious or secular private schools, without talmudic surveillance from the justices at every turn.

Most importantly, a neutrality test would help defuse the false tension that recent justices have created between the two religion clauses of the First Amendment. Separationists on the Burger Court were wrong to suggest that the Establishment Clause requires the religious discrimination that the Free Exercise Clause forbids. Statists on the Rehnquist Court are wrong to suggest that government can promote "religion in general" while refusing to accommodate the unpopular beliefs of religious minorities. Instead, the Free Exercise Clause protects your right to practice your own religion and the Establishment Clause prevents government from urging you to practice anyone else's. James Zobrest's interpreter doesn't threaten either principle, even if he signs a novena. •

Abdel Rahman's criminal past.

BLOODY SHEIKH

By Judith Miller

Since the assault on the World Trade Center last month, the main focus of the American investigation has been on the links between Mohammed A. Salameh, the alleged perpetrator of the bombing, and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who has been heard through a spokesman but not seen since the attack. Most assume that there is some connection between the bombing and the sheikh. But if Abdel Rahman's past record is any guide, investigators are unlikely to find a smoking *fatwa*—religious ruling—in his hands. For the sheikh has specialized in providing the religious inspiration and justification for such attacks without being directly responsible for them.

A case in point is the assassination of Anwar Sadat in October 1981. Despite the best efforts of Egyptian inves-

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tigators, Abdel Rahman was acquitted of direct involvement. He wriggled free thanks to the deliberate ambiguity of his role and the Egyptian government's evident ambivalence about executing a so-called religious leader, even a highly unorthodox one. Later he was rearrested and convicted, this time for the more mundane crime of check fraud; but this conviction too was overturned.

An examination of the notes of the interrogations of Abdel Rahman and of the five who were charged, convicted and executed for the Sadat murder sheds light on Abdel Rahman's role in the killing and shows why even the methodical work of Egypt's security apparatus failed to tie him to the crime. (A summary of the Egyptian police and prosecutor's interrogations is contained in the new edition of *The Arab Predicament*, Fouad Ajami's book on the plight of Arab intellectuals.) It makes it look all the more unlikely that the American government will be able to tie him directly to the bombing.

The Egyptian state had little trouble convicting and executing the four principal assassins, as well as Mohammed Abselsalam Farag, a young electrical engineer who dabbled in theology and who had written an explosive pamphlet titled "The Absent Obligation," which branded Sadat a *kafir* and put the Egyptian state beyond the faith. They were proud of their deed and boasted of it in their interrogations.

Of all the primary figures in the murder, Farag was viewed as the most honest and reliable by the prosecutors, who relied heavily on his statement in the trials. Farag knew he was going to die; he did not want his last sworn words to be lies. According to his testimony, Farag and his co-conspirators—young men in their 20s, or roughly the same age as Salameh—decided in early 1981, more than six months before they murdered Sadat, that they needed religious guidance and sanction for what at that time they only dreamed of doing. What they were seeking, in effect, was a writ for tyrannicide. "There came a time when we all agreed that we needed an *alim*, a older, seasoned scholar to give us guidance," Farag explains in his 107-page interrogation statement. "Karam Zohdi [one of the four convicted murderers] suggested Dr. Omar Abdel Rahman, because he had been his guide in Upper Egypt and his professor at the university in Asyut. We agreed."

In early 1981 Abdel Rahman was a minor teacher of religious studies at a far-flung branch of Al Azhar University, Egypt's oldest and largest Islamic college. He lived in the oasis town of Fayoum, but the quiet, scholarly life was not for him. As he was to do almost a decade later in the United States, he crisscrossed the villages and towns of upper Egypt, preaching at every *ahli*, or popular mosque that was not under the government's control. "Karam went to him, and I do not know exactly what occurred between them, but apparently he agreed to help us," Farag's statement continues. "A week later we went to his home in Fayoum, and we explained our problem to him. We told him that we were a secret group; we explained our thoughts and purposes; we told him that we needed an *alim* to help us. And he agreed. We told him that we were forming a consultative council to help govern ourselves and he agreed that this, too, was a good idea."

Abdel Rahman had also instructed the young militants in this *tanzim*, or secret group, to avoid government-controlled mosques. Any prayer made there was a wasted prayer, he told them. Only prayers uttered at *ahli* insurrectional mosques were heard by Allah. According to Farag and the others, Abdel Rahman also sanctioned the *tanzim*'s principal source of fund-raising—raids on jewelry stores and other shops owned by Egypt's Coptic Christians, who are once again primary targets of assaults by Islamic militants today. "We talked to Dr. Abdel Rahman about using the wealth of the Christians as war booty," Farag states. "And he ruled that this was legitimate."

In his own interrogation statement, Abdel Rahman does not dispute Farag's account of his guidance regarding the Copts. As he explained to the prosecutors, he divided the Copts into three groups: Copts who could be killed, or in his parlance, whose "blood was permissible," because they had fought or killed Muslims; a second group whose treasure and wealth could be seized; and a third group entitled to the "same rights as the rest of us." This *fatwa* permitted the militants to raid Coptic businesses and to extort from other Christians the money needed to buy arms. When the police arrested Abdel Rahman, they found in his home some $20,000, as well as considerable quantities of gold. Abdel Rahman's home, prosecutors concluded, had served as a laundry for loot. The cleric, in effect, was a fence.

In addition, the police found equipment for producing the cassettes through which Abdel Rahman was then spreading, and would continue to spread, his revolutionary messages. Egyptian officials assert that it was through such cassettes that Abdel Rahman publicized his *fatwa*s justifying the murder not only of Copts, but also of police officers. He also admitted that he had lent the *tanzim* 3,000 Egyptian pounds of his own money to advance its work.

But to secure a conviction against the sheikh for the murder of the pharaoh Sadat, Egyptian prosecutors had to prove that Abdel Rahman had engaged in *takfir al hakim*, declaring the ruler an unbeliever, thus providing religious sanction for the murder. But the prosecutors failed to do so. For while Farag and the others asserted, and Abdel Rahman did not deny, that he had been repeatedly asked to serve as emir, or leader of the *tanzim*, the government was unwilling to prove that the sheikh had, in fact, accepted the honor. The prosecutors could have asked hundreds of Egyptians to testify that they had heard Abdel Rahman denounce Sadat as a *kafir* in his Friday sermons. But they chose not to do so. So in court, it turned out to be the sheikh's word against that of the conspirators.

"They all came to see me," Abdel Rahman recounted in his own forty-four-page interrogation statement. "Karam Zohdi said these are committed brothers who

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were preparing and training a new generation [of Muslims] by teaching them *shuras* [verses] of the Koran and how to use guns. They asked me to be an emir of this group. But I refused. I told them I'm not the right man for this kind of work. I'm blind. I can't lead groups above ground, let alone underground. But they insisted. And I insisted that I would not do it." Three weeks later, Abdel Rahman continued, the group came back again and offered him the post of emir once more, and he refused it once again.

It was the eldest and highest-ranking military man involved in the coup, Colonel Abboud al-Zomor, who ultimately helped rescue the sheikh. Of all the conspirators, he alone denigrated Abdel Rahman's role in the murder and the importance of the religious advice he had given the group. Perhaps he did so out of jealousy. For the other conspirators testified that Zomor had viewed himself as the legitimate leader of the *tanzim*; and he had been enraged that much of the credit for the Sadat assassination had gone not to him, but to Khalid Istanbuli, a charismatic 27-year-old army lieutenant.

Farag, the engineer, said that Abdel Rahman had not known about one part of the plot: the group's plans to stage an uprising in Upper Egypt immediately after the Cairo assassination. "This part of the plan was not explained to Omar Abdel Rahman because he didn't have a military background," Farag asserted. This part of the plan, moreover, had not been fully thought through or finalized. But, Farag and the others insisted, Sheikh Abdel Rahman had branded Sadat a nonbeliever, and he had both known about and sanctioned the military strike before it took place.

Nevertheless, the charge failed to stick in court, because Abdel Rahman had artfully danced around his own connections to the *tanzim*, and because the Egyptian government was unwilling to risk pursuing a holy war against Islamic fundamentalism in the aftermath of the shocking and destabilizing murder. Ambiguity seemed a safer option. After all, then-Vice President Hosni Mubarak had been in the reviewing stand when Sadat was killed. The event must have left a deep wariness of confronting the religious leaders of such Islamic forces directly.

Hence, the outcome of the trial, from a moral and political standpoint, was dangerously ambiguous. For while the men who pulled the triggers at the military parade and the young electrical engineer who advocated the murder in print paid for their actions with their lives, the man whose spiritual and political inspiration and political guidance—arguably, an equally critical role—walked away free. And the initial vacillation of the Mubarak government has now spawned consequences that go far beyond the distant confines of the Middle East. They are likely, alas, to be felt here in the United States.

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The battle among the Clintonites.

WHOSE MANAGED COMPETITION?

By John B. Judis

Sometime last spring, Bill Clinton had a bright idea. Up till then, most Democrats had embraced a Canadian-style, single-payer health insurance system or a "play-or-pay" scheme in which employers either buy insurance for their employees or pay into a health fund for the uninsured. Both proposals promised universal access to care but threatened higher costs. Clinton broke ranks and endorsed a third strategy, one that seemed, like many other Clinton proposals, to square a few circles. It was called "managed competition." In managed competition, health care consumers (including the previously uninsured) are organized into large purchasing cooperatives that can bargain down prices, and insurers, physicians and hospitals are eventually merged into health maintenance organizations and other facilities (HMOs) that can achieve efficiency and economies of scale. Consumers will have choices, but of health plans rather than simply doctors.

When Hillary Rodham Clinton's task force on health care issues its proposal in May, it's likely that it will embrace this general concept. But calling Clinton's plan managed competition may obscure more than it reveals. Widely different plans and approaches now go by the name managed competition, and many of the old debates over single-payer and play-or-pay have reemerged within its framework. The real question about Clinton's program is not whether it will be managed competition, but what kind of managed competition it will be.

There are at least two kinds that Clinton's task force is considering and that enjoy support in Congress and among Washington lobbies. One, first introduced in

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HEALTH CARE REFORM THE PEOPLE

As the health care reform debate continues, one voice has been consistently left out — the consumer. Over the past year, the 32 voluntary health agencies listed below came together under the auspices of the National Health Council — an organization created 73 years ago to improve the health of all Americans — to add this missing voice. Representing 150 million Americans in virtually every community, these agencies worked together to draft a set of principles that must be included in any health care reform plan eventually enacted:

- It must address the full continuum of appropriate, timely and effective mental and physical health care services, including preventive, acute, chronic, rehabilitative, and long-term care.

- It must end the discriminatory insurance practice of denying or strictly limiting health coverage based on the presence of pre-existing chronic or other conditions.

- It must mandate the continuity of health insurance for all Americans, regardless of changes in their employment, geographic, or other status.

Alzheimer's Association • American Cancer Society • American Diabetes Association • American Heart Association • American Kidney Fund • American Liver Foundation • American Lung Association • American Social Health Association • Arthritis Foundation • Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America • Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America • Cystic Fibrosis Foundation • Epilepsy Foundation of America • Guillain-Barre Syndrome Foundation International • Huntington's Disease Society of America • Interstitial Cystitis Association • Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International • March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation • Myasthenia Gravis Foundation • National Down Syndrome Society • National Easter Seal Society • National Head Injury Foundation • National Hemophilia Foundation • National Mental Health Association • National Multiple Sclerosis Society • National Neurofibromatosis Foundation • National Psoriasis Foundation • National Society to Prevent Blindness • National Tuberous Sclerosis Association • RP Foundation Fighting Blindness • Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation • Spina Bifida Association of America

For more information and a copy of our statement of principles contact:

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1977 by Stanford economist Alain C. Enthoven, relies exclusively on market competition and tax incentives to contain costs and to broaden coverage—eschewing government regulation and mandates. Enthoven's approach is supported by the Conservative Democratic Forum, the Democratic Leadership Council, the American Hospital Association and large insurance companies.

The other approach, developed recently by Princeton sociologist Paul Starr and Walter Zelman, deputy to California insurance commissioner John Garamendi, assigns government a significant role in setting global budgets for the health care system and in founding and directing the large purchasing organizations that act on behalf of health care consumers. This alternative stresses public management over private competition. Starr's approach is backed by liberal Democrats on Capitol Hill, including Harris Wofford and Bob Kerrey, and by public interest and consumer lobbies. Unions and groups that back single-payer plans—such as the one just introduced by Senator Paul Wellstone—regard Starr's position as a fallback.

Starr's approach, like Enthoven's, is well represented on Clinton's health care task force. Both Starr and Zelman are members, as is Atul Gawande, a former aide to Tennessee Representative Jim Cooper, an Enthoven disciple. During the next month, as the Clinton task force completes its deliberations, and during the next year, as Congress debates the proposal, there will be endless squabblings over how the plan is to be financed; but the most important debate will be between the proponents of these different kinds of managed competition. Here are the strengths and weaknesses of the Enthoven and Starr approaches:

1. The Enthoven Model: The plans for national health insurance broached in the Truman, Johnson and Nixon administrations were primarily intended to make health care accessible to the uninsured. But during the 1970s policy experts became equally concerned about spiraling health care costs. These were brought about by a third-party insurance system that encouraged escalating expenditures, the proliferation and duplication of expensive new medical technology and the growth of Medicare and Medicaid. Since 1970 annual health care expenditures have grown from $60 billion to $900 billion.

Enthoven, a former Pentagon official in the Johnson administration, believed the health care system could be restructured to reduce costs without imposing tight government control. Enthoven's secret weapon was the development of HMOs. These organizations, which originated in the 1930s and began to spawn rapidly in the 1970s, combined the functions of provider, hospital and insurer. They were capable of saving money by reallocating resources within an integrated system. Their doctors, paid by salary, had an incentive to hold down expenditures. And as large institutions with thousands of subscribers, they could minimize the administrative overhead from which smaller companies with fewer clients suffered. According to a 1980 Rand study of the Health Cooperative of Puget Sound, the Seattle-based HMO averaged costs that were 28 percent below fee-for-service providers without any diminution in quality.

But within a health care system still dominated by fee-for-service medicine and less integrated forms of managed care, these savings often went unrealized. With little incentive to hold down costs, HMOs "shadow-priced" insurance companies, charging only slightly less than their competitors. Enthoven thought he could encourage a trend toward cost-conscious HMOs and away from fee-for-service medicine by injecting price competition into the purchase of health care premiums. He proposed limiting employers' tax deduction on health insurance to the lowest-cost plan and encouraging small businesses and uninsured individuals to band together in health insurance purchasing cooperatives (HIPCs, pronounced "hippicks") to purchase insurance on the best terms and at the lowest cost. Enthoven reasoned that only the most efficient provider-insurance companies could survive such a reorganized health care system.

Enthoven also believed that such a system could remedy some of the injustices of the old health care system. Under the old system, insurance companies could pick and choose among clients and adjust their rates for the health experience of each consumer. But HIPCs would have the leverage to force insurance companies and HMOs to gear their premiums to the community average rather than to individual risks.

Together with Paul Ellwood, the Minnesota physician who coined the term "health maintenance organization," Enthoven organized annual meetings at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where academics, government officials and health industry representatives worked out a program for managed competition. Last year Cooper, a Jackson Hole regular, introduced the Managed Competition Act of 1992. Cooper's plan would provide tax breaks for health providers and insurance companies that formed super-HMOs called accountable health plans (AHPs). These plans must offer a federally defined standard package to anyone who applies for coverage, regardless of his previous health condition.

According to Cooper's plan, businesses with more

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than 1,000 employees could bargain on their own with the AHPs or even form their own AHP. The politically untouchable Medicare system would continue as is. But everyone else, including Medicaid recipients, would be encouraged to join a state-organized non-profit HIPC that would bargain on his or her behalf with the AHPs.

Cooper's plan would not impose overall budgets on the health care system or directly control prices, as Medicare does. It would hold down costs by enhancing consumer bargaining power and limiting health care deductions to the lowest-cost plan. It would also not guarantee universal coverage. The very poor would have their coverage fully paid for, while the working poor would be given partial subsidies. Businesses would not have to pay their employees' insurance.

Behind Enthoven and Cooper's approach lay a vision of a transformed health care system. Under managed competition, many of the 1,300 small insurance companies, which survive by "cherry-picking" their clients, would go under, and the larger companies would follow the lead of CIGNA and AETNA and form insurer-hospital-physician networks that resemble HMOs. Doctors—members of capitalism's last medieval guild—would become salaried professionals. And consumers, who once identified their medical needs with their personal doctor, would increasingly think of themselves as belonging to one of the plans offered by their HIPC. It would be a significant change, but would it lead to lower costs and expanded coverage?

Health care and budget experts have raised real doubts about whether Enthoven and Cooper's pure market approach will hold down costs. According to Congressional Budget Office director Robert Reischauer, the enactment of Cooper's bill "would leave national health expenditures at approximately the same level they would reach otherwise."

Reischauer speculated that in the long run expenditures "would gradually slow" as more consumers choose HMOs, but other experts doubt even the long-term benefits of managed competition. Brookings Institution's Henry Aaron dismisses Enthoven and Cooper's claims of cost savings as "expressions of faith, not experience." As Aaron notes, the experience of California's Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)—thought to be the closest approximation of managed competition—is not reassuring.

CalPERS buys health insurance for 900,000 state and local employees. Like one of Enthoven's HIPCs, it offers its members insurance from nineteen HMOs and from two preferred provider organizations (PPOs) of fee-for-service physicians. It annually bargains with providers to ensure the lowest rates. And there is a financial incentive for CalPERS members to select HMOs, since they require less out-of-pocket expenses. Enthoven, who is chairman of CalPERS's Health Benefits Advisory Committee, praised the system as "powerful evidence that managed competition works."

But from 1982 to 1992, average family health premiums for CalPERS members climbed higher than the national average of 9.4 percent—9.8 percent for CalPERS's HMOs and 12.9 percent for its fee-for-service PPOs. CalPERS's spending on health has only begun to decelerate in the last two years because the state government, facing insolvency, has forced CalPERS to demand zero increases in premiums and to freeze enrollment in health plans that have insisted on raising their rates. The plans themselves accommodated reduced rates by slimming their standard benefits package and by shifting costs to their other subscribers. San Francisco HMO Qual-Med increased its CalPERS rate by only 1.5 percent but its regular premiums 9.2 percent.

CalPERS's experience suggests that managed competition, if allowed to operate on normal market principles, will not lead to dramatic cost reductions. Costs begin to decelerate only when the government intervenes to impose severe budgetary restraints. But in the process, the quality of services may decline.

Cooper's bill for managed competition also suffers from another drawback. It doesn't guarantee universal coverage. Under Cooper's plan, many small business employees would probably remain uninsured. Yet as Enthoven himself acknowledges, without guaranteed universal insurance, "market pressures to cut costs could exacerbate access problems." The uninsured, who formerly have frequented emergency rooms, would now find themselves cast out of the health system entirely.

But even if coverage were universal, Enthoven and Cooper's model of managed competition could still create a two-tier system of health insurance. The present caste system between insured customers and Medicaid patients would reappear as a distinction between patients who purchase supplemental benefits and those who purchase the low-cost alternative. Moreover, if employers can opt out of joining the HIPCs, then those with low-risk populations could cut special deals with Cooper's AHPs, while firms with high-risk populations would dump them on the HIPCs, raising the cost of the publicly subsidized system.

Enthoven and Cooper's system would certainly be preferable to what we have now. It's hard to eliminate class distinctions in social service delivery as long as income itself is distributed unequally. And at its worst, managed competition would be better at reducing costs than the "play-or-pay" scheme so popular a year ago. But Enthoven's version of managed competition does remain deficient in controlling costs and ensuring access.

2. *The Starr Model:* Like other liberal proponents of managed competition, Paul Starr used to favor a single-payer system. Starr, author of *The Logic of Healthcare Reform* and co-editor of *The American Prospect*, switched to managed competition partly because he despaired of single-payer ever being enacted over the opposition of Republicans and the powerful health care lobbies. But more important, he recognized that, with the growth of HMOs and other managed care systems, the American health system had become more amenable to

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Enthoven's managed competition strategy.

In devising a plan, Starr's strategy was to supplement managed competition with features borrowed from single-payer plans. He advocated imposing a global budget on the entire health care system. He and Zelman propose in the current *Health Affairs* that the government set a "maximum allowable rate of increase" on the low-cost premiums, while setting a discretionary target on out-of-pocket spending with the higher-cost premiums. By imposing a global budget, Starr would do nationally what the state of California did to CalPERS.

Starr would mandate insurance coverage for all citizens and fund it primarily through a payroll tax. He would also take steps to mitigate the creation of a two-tier health care system. While he would allow companies with more than 1,000 employees to opt out of the system, he would impose restrictions on their joining HIPCs and on the kind of insurance they offer their employees. Companies, for instance, that tried to dump their older employees into the HIPCs would find their own premiums risk-rated. But some of Starr's measures seem more cosmetic. He insists on calling the low-income plan the "benchmark premium." And he wants to require that all the plans, no matter how expensive, include a certain percentage of low-income consumers at the same rates as the benchmark plan—a kind of get-well fellowship for the deserving poor.

Some liberal proponents of managed competition want to go further than Starr and Zelman. Richard Brown, a UCLA professor who serves on Clinton's task force and the Catholic Health Association, advocates making premiums uniform in price—forcing plans to compete only on service—and requiring everyone to join a HIPC. From the standpoint of the health consumer, the Brown-Catholic Health Association Plan would operate almost identically to Canada's single-payer system. The only difference would be that consumers would choose health plans rather than doctors.

Starr also foresees a more active role for the HIPCs than do Enthoven and Cooper. He wants them to serve as regulatory bodies that maintain high standards of service delivery. "The purchasing cooperatives should be seen as aggressive advocates for consumers on both price and service," Starr explained to a gathering of public interest groups last December.

Starr's approach begins to remedy the main weaknesses of Enthoven's version of managed competition. It would probably hold down the increase in health care costs during the program's first years, although Starr would not include Medicare within managed competition and would not limit the tax deduction on premiums. By mandating coverage, Starr's proposal would produce a more equitable health care system. But it has significant weaknesses of its own. Even more than Enthoven and Cooper's plans, Starr's would threaten the quality of health care service.

The combination of managed competition and global budgets would create what Brookings senior fellow Joseph White calls a "bloody transition" toward a more cost-effective HMO-based system. While HMOs have grown rapidly in the last two decades, only 20 percent of Americans are presently enrolled in integrated plans such as Kaiser. Most of the growth has occurred in PPOs or independent practice associations that are run by insurance companies and that pay discounted fee-for-service rates to groups of physicians. As many as 70 percent of Americans belong to these managed care plans.

Eventually, many of these plans, unable to compete on cost, would merge into HMOs and other larger care networks; but in the short term, they would be likely to fight for survival by using bureaucratic review to discourage both necessary and unnecessary medical procedures. The sick could be inhibited from seeking treatment and doctors from providing it. Laments Washington internist Daniel Ein, "From the physician's standpoint, global budgets and managed care are the worst of all worlds." Starr's plan, in other words, could represent at least a short-term trade-off between curtailing costs and expanding coverage on the one hand and maintaining quality on the other hand. Americans who can immediately join a quality HMO will benefit, but those who have to depend on a preferred provider plan may wish that national health reform had never occurred.

Policy experts, lobbyists and Capitol Hill aides who have met with Clinton's task force expect that the final product, announced on May 1, will resemble Starr's plan. "I would be surprised if the result isn't something that looks like Paul Starr's book," says one well-placed Senate staffer. Clinton's determination not to increase the deficit argues in favor of Starr's plan for global budgeting or at least for price controls. Ira Magaziner, Hillary Rodham Clinton's deputy on the task force, has indicated in private meetings that he favors government spending controls. But the pressure not to increase the deficit also argues against immediately guaranteeing health insurance for all Americans. And the desire to minimize upheaval argues for allowing employers to opt out of the HIPC system.

Clinton and the task force also face opposing political pressures. If they move toward Starr's plan, they will offend the most powerful health care lobbies, who will find allies among Republican conservatives, small business people and insurance underwriters, all of whom prefer the status quo to any version of managed competition. But if Clinton balks at global budgeting and universal coverage, he will have little to show the voters in 1996.

Clinton's dilemma is similar to the one Ronald Reagan faced in 1981. Reagan wanted to increase military spending, cut taxes and balance the budget—a patent impossibility—just as Clinton wants to expand coverage, contain costs and maintain quality. Enthoven's and Starr's versions of managed competition can do some of these things, but not all of them at the same time. Like Reagan, Clinton has to choose among his priorities. And whatever choice he makes, he is in for a political fight. •

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THE TECHNOLOGY TIME BOMB

By Robert Wright

In mid-February, Hillary Rodham Clinton—"a tough-talking Hillary Rodham Clinton," the *Los Angeles Times* observed—made her first rhetorical splash as health policy czar. At a conference in Pennsylvania, she decried "our failure to face up to this health care crisis" and pledged to start the nation on "the march toward facing reality." We must, she said, "face up to the costs in this system, and we have to have the courage to talk about that openly." Donna Shalala, secretary of health and human services, is also pro-courage. The health care crisis, she said on the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," grew out of an "unwillingness to make tough decisions" on the part of "the government, the political system, the public in general."

What are these tough decisions that we must courageously face? Good question. Pressed by Jim Lehrer to elaborate, Shalala said, "What specifically those decisions are I'm not willing to commit myself to at this point." Meanwhile, Clinton seems to be asking for courage from a pretty small group—pharmaceutical executives and others in the health care industry who seem to make too much money. In Pennsylvania the closest she came to asking for broad sacrifice was to say that Americans should lead healthier lives—quit smoking, drink less, etc.

No doubt there is money to be saved by squeezing fat and some profit out of the health care industry—and maybe, too, by discouraging smoking through sin taxes. But it looks increasingly as if, in the long run, the only way to control costs is to ask Americans for courage in a truer sense of the word: the courage to forgo medical treatments whose social costs outweigh their individual benefits. Health care will consume a growing share of economic output until the ethos of the medical profession changes from infinite sympathy to zero-sum utilitarian calculus. The word politicians are loathe to say in public is "rationing."

But they may have to start saying it in private, within the confines of the administration's task force on health care reform. For in the absence of some mechanism for rationing, the cost of a universal health care package will be extremely, perhaps prohibitively, high. If Bill Clinton truly wants to give health coverage nationwide breadth, he will probably have to limit its depth.

Even if we somehow dodge this trade-off for the time being, we'll have trouble escaping it in the long run. It is pressed upon us by basic technological forces that show no signs of abating: the relentless creation of ever more subtle and ever more expensive treatments for an ever expanding array of maladies (some of which, indeed, aren't considered maladies until the treatments arrive). Coping with this trend through rationing—making hard choices about the quality of people's lives, and even about who gets to live—won't be a pleasant enterprise. But surely it's preferable to the only likely alternative: a world in which the market remains the primary rationer and an ever rising standard of physical well-being leaves low-income Americans entirely behind.

The case for rationing begins with the nature of health insurance. It is common to blame the profligate use of medical technology on lawyers who sue unless every conceivable diagnostic test has been done. And certainly "defensive medicine" is a problem. But a larger problem is that patients often *want* every conceivable diagnostic test done, because they have to pay, at most, a small fraction of the cost.

Would you pay $1,000 for a magnetic resonance imaging brain scan if, judging by your symptoms, the chances were 99.9 percent that it wouldn't turn up a problem worth treating? Almost no one ever gets asked that question. As a result, these are the very chances that typically prevail for an MRI user who has recurring headaches or dizziness but no evident neurological problems; an estimated one in 1,000 of these MRIs—and possibly more like one in 3,000—finds a brain tumor or aneurysm. We pay between $1 million and $3 million per life thus saved, thanks largely to the insulating effect of insurance.

Thirty years ago this insulation had little consequence, because medicine offered few exotic technologies. Today it offers many: MRIs; artificial hips (about $20,000); coronary bypasses ($20,000); organ transplants ($100,000 or higher); implantable cardiac defibrillators ($40,000); bone marrow transplants (around $100,000, and they're often futile); a genetically engineered drug called Ceredase (up to hundreds of thousands of dollars per year) for a rare illness called

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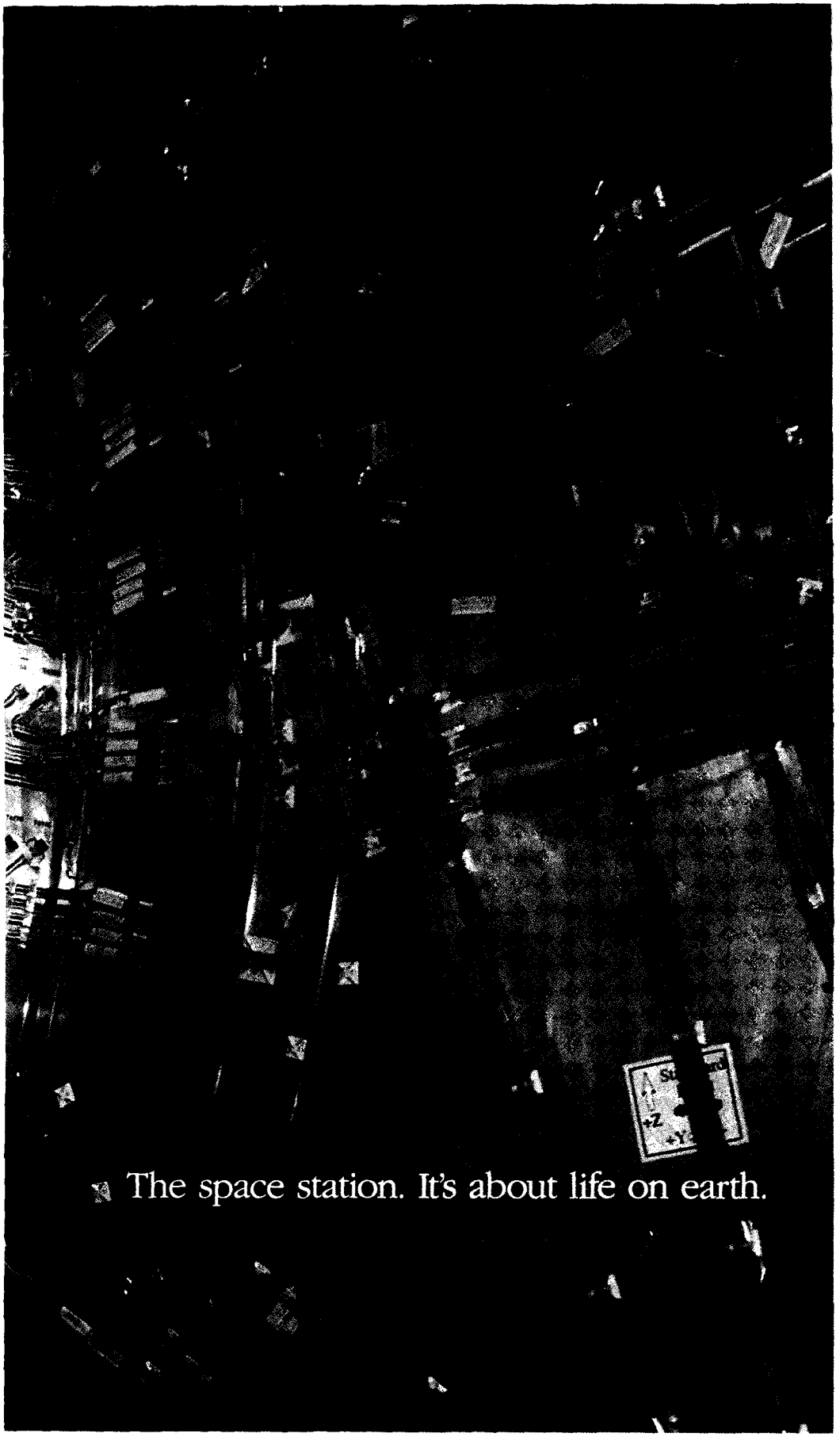

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Gaucher's disease. And so on.

In his book *Serious and Unstable Condition: Financing America's Health Care*, Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institution shows that these sorts of technological advances greatly outweigh all other factors commonly blamed for rising health care costs, such as the aging of the population and malpractice litigation. And William B. Schwartz of the University of Southern California, co-author with Aaron of the 1984 book *The Painful Prescription: Rationing Hospital Care*, has demonstrated that many cost-cutting measures *other* than rationing have largely run their course.

For example: "unnecessary care" in the form of extravagant hospital lodging. Inpatient stays in community hospitals contracted markedly during the early 1980s. At the same time, the annual rise in overall costs at such hospitals (in real terms) fell from more than 8 percent to around 2 percent. HHS Secretary Margaret Heckler was ecstatic: "We have broken the back of the health care inflation monster," she said. Two years later Schwartz wrote an article for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* called "The Inevitable Failure of Current Cost-Containment Strategies," in which he predicted roughly what would happen next. The length of inpatient stays ceased to drop, having reached the long-admired average found in health maintenance organizations. With nothing left to mask the underlying growth in medical technology, the 2 percent figure that so thrilled Heckler climbed up around its previous range.

And so it is with just about every other cost-cutting measure. Cuts—in doctors' salaries, pharmaceutical profits, etc.—will partly negate the rising cost of technology, so overall spending may level out. But you can't keep cutting these things indefinitely. As technological forces return to center stage, overall spending growth returns to previous levels. It's fine to cut out fat, but unless that fat has been growing—unless it is part not just of overall costs but of annual *increases* in overall costs—cutting it will have no long-term effect on the rate of cost increases. (And in recent years, many kinds of fat have been shrinking.)

This principle may provide a rude awakening for advocates of "managed competition," the program the Clinton administration has favored. Much of the program's theorized savings would come from encouraging HMO-style care—partnerships of doctors, hospitals and insurers that compete for customers on the basis of price and service. This may be a good idea, since HMOs seem cheaper than fee-per-service coverage (though some suspect this is only because relatively healthy people opt for HMOs). But once you've got costs down to HMO levels, what do you do next? As Aaron and Schwartz note, the rate of increase of HMO costs has historically been almost indistinguishable from the rate of increase for conventional insurance. So managed competition will at best bring a few years of the Heckler illusion, after which we're back on the technological escalator, if a few steps lower than before.

As both Aaron and Schwartz stress, the list of exotic new medical technologies is not a list of things that should be banned. In some cases MRIs have a good chance of revealing a brain tumor. The trick is to tell when they don't, and to get doctors to forgo them. At least, that's half the trick; the other half is to admit that every once in a while—however good your guidelines for MRI use—they'll lead you astray, and a brain tumor will go undetected.

Even with this admission, diagnostic technology is relatively easy to curtail without losing sleep. The more uncomfortable questions come when the treatment stands a reasonable chance of success but the meaning of "success" is debatable. If a cardiac defibrillator prevents heart attacks in a generally healthy 55-year-old, yielding another fifteen or twenty years of robust life, that's success by any definition. But what about a 70-year-old with bad kidneys and lungs? Is his body a good place for society to invest $40,000? Do you want to be the one to tell him it's not?

The list of such painful questions is long. What is it worth to extend the life of a bedridden AIDS patient by what is almost sure to be only a few (fairly miserable) months barring a sudden breakthrough? Should we spend $100,000 on a congenital heart defect that will probably kill the patient before adulthood anyway? How much is your life depreciated if you're frequently fatigued and have to spend large chunks of every week chained to a dialysis machine?

There are people who actually try to answer such questions, assessing treatment costs in terms of QALYs, or "quality-adjusted life years." In Britain, where health care has long been universal and rationed, academics have compiled "QALY league tables" which, for example, put the cost of a kidney transplant for a given patient at £3,000 ($4,350) per QALY, whereas dialysis would cost £14,000 ($20,300) per QALY. (The actual rationing in Britain isn't so fine or explicit; dialysis machines are scarce, and doctors simply don't prescribe them for patients who are old or generally ill.)

Oregon took a highly quantitative approach in its notorious 1992 plan to ration Medicaid. It listed 709 treatments from highest benefit/cost ratio to lowest and let legislators decide where it could afford to draw the line. Under one likely set of fiscal constraints, life-prolonging care would have been denied to end-stage AIDS patients and also cancer patients whose disease had spread beyond one region, to the point where 95 percent of patients die within five years even with treatment. Also low on the list: treatment for varicose veins, surgery for lower-back pain, sex-change operations, treatment for chronic bronchitis.

The Oregon plan was denounced by such liberal groups as the Children's Defense Fund, an ideological touchstone for Shalala and Hillary Clinton, both of whom have chaired its board of directors. (And even many rationing advocates considered some of the plan's rigid guidelines—banning, say, all liver transplants for

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cancer, regardless of whether the cancer has spread—a bit ham-handed.) But savings from the plan would have let Oregon expand its Medicaid rolls by 50 percent—120,000 people—and thus provide health insurance to everyone below the poverty line. The Children's Defense Fund got its way, and those 120,000 people still have no health insurance.

One complaint about the Oregon plan was that it rationed health care only below the poverty line; the well-to-do would still have had a full menu of treatments. Drawing this boundary at the poverty line isn't a necessary feature of rationing, of course, but it is true that rationing won't, in the real world, apply to everyone. The affluent are always willing to pay for things insurance doesn't cover, or to buy supplementary insurance in advance. And banning that discretion seems to be politically impossible. (How many Americans, even lower-middle-class Americans, want to be told that they can't use their hard-earned money however they want if their son or daughter is ill?) In Britain and other countries with rationing, escape hatches exist.

The choice we face, then, may come down to this: (a) a future in which health care is universal but escape hatches from rationing create gross disparities between rich and poor; or (b) a future with no rationing, but no universal health care, and thus grosser disparities between rich and poor—that is, a future like the present. (Only more so. Now the indigent can extract charity from hospitals. But that charity is an implicit subsidy, coming from other people's insurance premiums. Aaron has noted that, as cost-containment pressure grows, there is less subsidy money floating around, so hospitals become less charitable—as, indeed, some are already becoming.)

Advocates of universal health care may manage to ignore this dilemma in the near future. It's possible, they can say, to provide full coverage for everyone without rationing. Maybe so. Though the cost would badly dent Clinton's fiscal plans, maybe, through extraordinary belt-tightening within the health care industry, the dent could be kept manageable; and maybe the bond market wouldn't react too fearfully to the gloomier budget forecasts, so the economy wouldn't quite enter another recession; and maybe, with another rhetorical tour de force, Clinton could sell the plan to the public even with its high cost. But we'd still be on the technological escalator. The day of reckoning will come, unless we're willing to have health expenditures—which rose from 5 percent of GDP to 13 percent between 1961 and 1991—consume an ever growing piece of the pie.

Of course, there's always the hope for a miracle cure, hope that technology will solve the crisis it has created. As biotechnology makes medical interventions less elaborately mechanical and more molecular, couldn't treatment get cheaper? This hope is almost sure to be dashed. Still, the dashing is of an instructive sort.

Biotechnology certainly could lower the costs of some treatments. Consider gene therapy, in which defective cells—blood cells, brain tumor cells—are corrected by amending their DNA. Now in experimental stages, gene therapy is still unthinkably expensive, and it will never be dirt cheap. But "cheap" is a relative thing. With the immune disorder called adenosine deaminase deficiency—the "bubble boy" disease, made famous in a made-for-T.V. movie—the alternatives to gene therapy are (a) keeping the patient in a sealed, sterilized world (until he dies at, say, age 12, after a germ somehow sneaks in); or (b) giving him a bone marrow transplant that costs around $100,000 and may well fail. In the case of cancer, now treated capital-intensively, labor-intensively and often unsuccessfully, the eventual savings from an effective gene therapy could be large.

Another candidate for (relatively) cheap cure is human growth hormone. In 1990 a researcher found something that he insisted was "not the fountain of youth" but that bore a strong resemblance to it. Men over 60 who were given shots of HGH for six months saw health improvements "equivalent in magnitude to the changes incurred during ten to twenty years of aging." Skin thickened, body fat dropped, muscles grew. Internal organs—heart, kidneys, intestines—seemed to have regained some long-lost vigor. (Alas, no help for brain cells from HGH.)

Confident interpretation awaits more research, but HGH may eventually be used to broadly forestall organic failures that, taken one by one, are now treated at great expense. HGH treatment now costs more than $10,000 a year, but the price will probably drop as its production, via genetically engineered bacteria or mammals, is refined. (Already the hormone is much cheaper than in the days when it was scavenged from the brains of cadavers.)

All this sounds wonderful. But look more closely. First of all, those postponed organ failures will come home to roost at *some* point. And other failures, not postponed by HGH (Alzheimer's disease, say), will keep accumulating. So treatment for the elderly will still be more costly than treatment for the young. As HGH, like all life-extending treatments, increases the elderly fraction of the population, total health care costs will grow.

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There is an even larger problem with miracle cures. True, HGH and gene therapy may reduce the cost of particular treatments. But, like so much medical technology, they also expand the range of the treatable, making more and more maladies targets of health care. In an important sense, they redefine health itself, making it a more expensive concept.

After all, senior citizens with slowly withering organs aren't in a strict sense sick—they're just old. Their bodies are falling apart, as bodies seem designed to do. Of course, you could say the same about other commonly treated "maladies," such as fading eyesight. And that's the point: there was a time when those things weren't treatable either. Technology has long been driving up expenses by increasing not just the cost of treatment, but its breadth. For previous generations, a bum knee was a bum knee—cause to take things easy, maybe switch from jogging to swimming. Now a bum knee is a chance to plug in the MRI, discern some damaged cartilage and get arthroscopic surgery. Willard Gaylin of the Hastings Center, a biomedical ethics institute, says that "half of what we call health today would not have been considered health fifty years ago."

And that's nothing compared with the next fifty years. Some children who aren't close to being dwarfs but are much shorter than average take daily HGH injections at a cost of more than $150,000 over ten years, and have gotten their health insurance to pay out. It isn't yet clear that they'll get more than a fleeting growth spurt for their trouble. But there is no doubt that biotechnology will offer an expanding range of finer and finer tunings of our physical selves, raising the threshold of "normal" health.

And finer tunings of our mental selves. Designer drugs will increasingly go beyond the correction of severe mental illness and offer to make people a bit more serene, say, or more gregarious—without the self-defeating side effects of sedatives, stimulants and other crude drugs of past generations. Memory capacity, verbal fluency, math skills—all are likely to respond to the manipulation of brain chemistry, and some show signs of doing so already. (The northern California rage for "smart drugs" is largely ill-informed but not wholly off-track.) With mental as with physical "health," we are headed toward an era when medicine makes people not just healthily human, but healthier than humans, raising them above the frailties to which our species has always been heir. If lines aren't drawn, if the concept of "health" isn't somehow circumscribed, medical costs will grow forever.

And again: the lines will almost certainly not be drawn equally for rich and poor. The increasingly unavoidable choice will be between gross disparities and grosser disparities. Both options look particularly repulsive as the range of the treatable expands and things like intelligence and youth itself—or at least selected dimensions of intelligence and youth—become purchasable. Some of these things (assuming we don't ban them altogether) will have to be universally available if we're to keep paying even lip service to our egalitarian ideals. And we won't be able to afford that unless other things *aren't* universally available. The urgency of this argument will be doubled as some parents start using technology to choose genes for their unborn children (see "Achilles' Helix," TNR, July 9 & 16, 1990).

Rationing health care would have the added virtue of slowing this whole process down. Health insurance distorts investment patterns. By giving Americans more elaborate care than they would buy if they felt the true costs, it signals capital markets to divert more resources toward the development of medical technology than America actually "wants." So "artificial" spending constraints such as rationing only neutralize an artificial investment stimulus that, left to its own devices, will bring us a rapidly growing array of grotesque political dilemmas. They'll come soon enough anyway. Why rush?

Managed competition, though probably not the best vehicle for rationing, could accommodate it. For example, HMO-type organizations could be given austere budget limits and told to divvy up finite medical resources with costs and benefits in mind (a scenario Schwartz and Aaron analyze in a just-publicized special issue of *Health Affairs*). Presumably local ethical committees, equipped with QALY tables and reams of other statistics, would help with the tougher choices.

As conceived by its architects—the "Jackson Hole Group"—managed competition would involve no rationing. Then again, the Jackson Hole Group consists largely of doctors, drug company executives and others whose enthusiasm for cost containment surely isn't without twinges of ambivalence.

Budget caps are said to have support within the administration's health care task force. The questions are whether they'd be low enough to entail rationing and how explicit the rationing would be. Bill Clinton's sentiments remain unclear, but he has said he favors caps of some magnitude, and he now seems willing to let Oregon proceed with its rationing plan (which has been revised since President Bush nixed it).

During the campaign, when pressed on whether Clinton favored rationing, his spokesmen typically responded, "We *already* ration health care" by keeping it from the poor. True—indeed, that's the crux of the argument for rationing—but evasive. It will soon be time for Bill Clinton—and Hillary Clinton and Donna Shalala—to come clean and tell us whether they do or don't support rationing. Hiding behind ambiguities—whether "budget caps" or "tough decisions"—may work for now. But if the administration's health care plan really does confront rising costs, there won't be time for any more coyness. Word about the true meaning of stringent budget caps will reach Americans one way or another. If the word doesn't come from the administration, early and forthrightly, they're not likely to be in a mood to summon much courage. •

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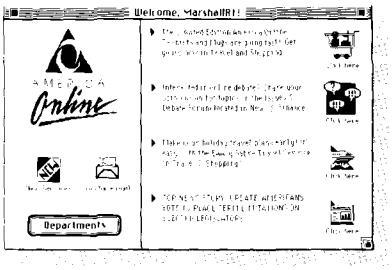

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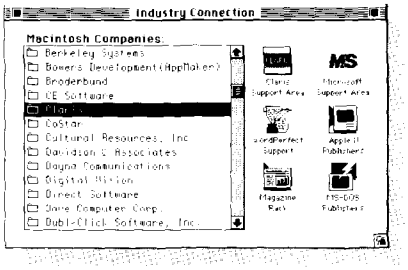

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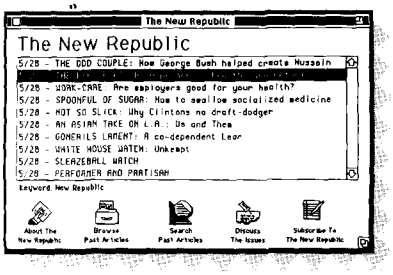
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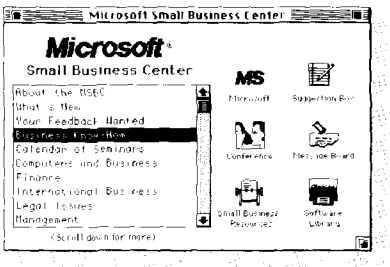

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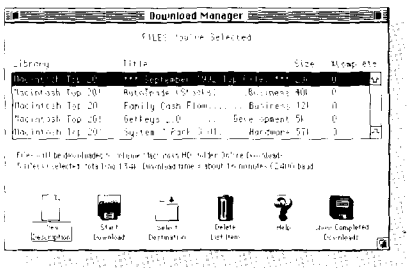

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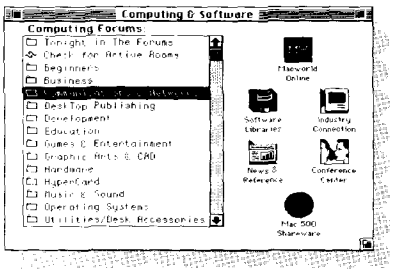

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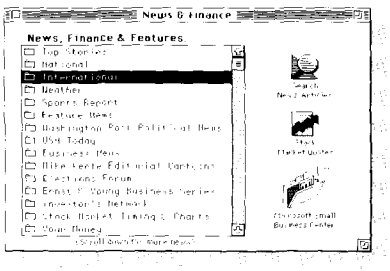

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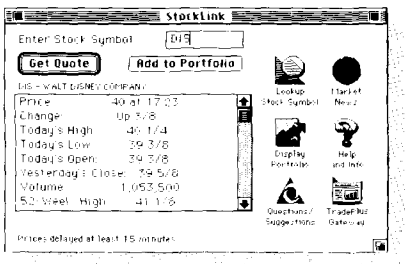

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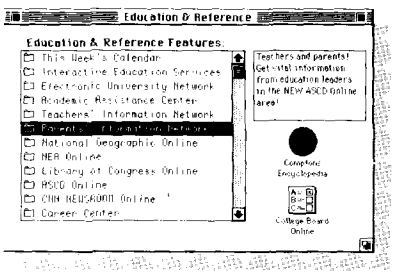

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Watching Women

A prime concept in feminist film criticism is the "male gaze," essentially the idea that "the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form." Much of this argument seems to me enlightening and just, so I felt particularly guilty of male gazing at **The Last Days of Chez Nous** (Fine Line). The guilt was particular because this film was written, designed, directed and produced by women.

The feminist critique postulates that, throughout film history, films have been shaped by male desires and fears; yet what I'll chiefly remember from this film made by women are the faces of the women I was given to look at for ninety-six minutes. Not so much their faces as *actors*, as one might look at the beautiful Vanessa Redgrave or Anjelica Huston. The women in *Chez Nous* are talented enough, but the film's chief pleasure for me was in looking at them simply as a male, indulging in the fantasies that are, and are seemingly meant to be, inevitable.

Yet this feast was presented to me by female filmmakers. Were they still trapped within the "structured film form"? Or was I seeing a refusal by these filmmakers to truckle to male expectation of feminist filmmaking? An implication that they would use female qualities as they damned well chose to use them? In any case I luxuriated in sultanic-aesthetic bliss while watching the picture. It's Australian, set mainly in Sydney with a considerable section in the Outback. The chez that is nous includes Lisa Harrow as a writer of publishable novels, Kerry Fox as her unmarried sister, Miranda Otto as Harrow's teenage daughter and Bruno Ganz as Harrow's husband, though not her daughter's father. (The man is French, and Ganz bravely essays the accent.)

Helen Garner's screenplay opts for the novelistic approach. What this means, in barbarously simple terms, is that Garner lets characters simmer, lets the action develop from this simmering rather than, as prescribed by Aristotle, beginning with action, which then develops the characters. The novelistic approach has bred many fine films (Eric Rohmer's are key examples); indeed this film is more interesting in the early parts when characters are only simmering, before the quite predictable action begins.

Harrow and Ganz are not getting on very well. She loves him and tells him so; his love is waning, and he invents reasons to justify the change. She asks too many questions, she cuts a brie before it is ripe, she invents conversations to no purpose—all the sorts of irritations that are only surface symptoms of deeper clutter. She teases him about an affair he may be having with a girl. He teases her—perhaps it's not teasing—by admitting it.

Fox, the sister, comes back from some time in Italy at the start of the picture—the first sound we hear is the scraping of the wheels on her suitcase—and subsequently informs Harrow that she is pregnant. Harrow persuades her to have an abortion; Fox complies but is emotionally shaken by the operation, before and after. Harrow then goes on a two-week auto trip with her aging father, out in the Australian desert, bleak but grand in its vastness. She and her father have never gotten along well, and she wants to make some conciliatory moves before it's too late. This trip, as might have been foretold, has dubious results.

As might also have been foretold, Fox and Ganz fuse while Harrow is away. (As a light counterpoint to this involvement, Harrow's daughter and a young boarder in their house are having their own fandango.) When the wife returns, she soon scents the change. Ganz then explodes as if it were her fault, as if she were insufficiently understanding. He leaves with Fox. At the end, Harrow, alone, rises from her front porch and moves off toward the city in search of... something.

Nothing is resolved in the film—the ending, or how long Fox and Ganz will stay together, or anything else—and this is all to the good. The story's plot interferes with the film's best asset: its treatment of daily lives. But plot or no plot, what's astonishing in this film about two women and a man is that the man's wishes, complaints, dissatisfactions are taken as the crux. Both sisters and even Harrow's daughter treat Ganz as legislator. His pleasures and displeasures are accepted—not always meekly but nonetheless accepted. His wishes are to be gratified.

None of this is presented as even vaguely satiric; there's not the slightest hint that women's subservience, however stormy, is in question. The screenplay could have used a denser texture,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Groundhog Day. *Fantasy. Bill Murray is enjoyable (that's a fantasy right there) as a T.V. weatherman doomed to repeat Groundhog Day endlessly in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Amusing idea, adequately done. (Reviewed 3/15/93)* **The Oak.** *Romania. A harrowing comedy about love and honesty in Ceausescu-time. Maia Morgenstern, the protagonist, is an explosive talent. (2/8/93)* **Riff-Raff.** *London. A rowdy, enjoyable comedy-drama about construction workers and the sweetheart of one of them. Ken Loach does wonders with his mostly non-professional cast. (2/15/93)* **Stolen Children.** *Italy. An 11-year-old girl, who has been prostituted by her mother, and her younger brother are escorted from Milan to a children's home in Sicily by a sympathetic policeman. No sentiment. Taciturnly tragic. (3/22/93)* **—SK**

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some theme below the engaging dailiness, but more notable than that lack is a presence—that of the rooster-among-clucking-hens syndrome.

The director was Gillian Armstrong, who made an international splash in 1979 with *My Brilliant Career*, the film that also brought to the world the acting of Judy Davis and the cinematography of Don McAlpine. Among the films that Armstrong has made since then were the mildly appealing *High Tide* and, in America, the quite unappealing *Mrs. Soffel*. She has had a bumpy career, and *Chez Nous*, though plainly the work of a talent, may not smooth it.

Her cinematographer this time is Geoffrey Simpson, who works in slabs of color: one sequence is gray blue, the next dull red, and so on. This is attractive for a while but then seems to be pointless—arbitrary rather than schematic. The single best shot is of a lighted telephone booth in the Outback, seen against a huge late-twilight sky, but that shot seems suggested by a closing moment in Antonioni's *The Passenger*.

At last, as at first, there's the basic paradox for the male viewer, more basic than the phallocentrism of the story itself. Armstrong presents a screenful of lovely faces, Harrow's, Fox's, Otto's—especially Harrow's, with its combination of beauty and comprehended experience. I'm not arguing for homeliness, though talented non-beauties certainly exist, nor against the rightful place of sexuality in film and theater. (Besides, in a film about the tidal motions of sex, how could they use actors who are not engaging as sexual agents?) I don't in fact argue anything: I wonder. So much loveliness, so many irresistible occasions for male gazing. Couldn't these women filmmakers have chosen at least one woman who was just a mite less lovely? •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Architectural Barriers

The Barbican Theatre, where the Stratford-based Royal Shakespeare Company hangs out in winter, is a massive concrete complex largely subsidized by the Crown and wholly devoted to plays. No one really likes the building (or its similarly endowed sister institution, the Royal National Theatre on the South Bank), which is located in a commercial part of the city underpopulated at night. And it is unfortunate that England's two major theaters are not organically linked to neighborhoods. (The Royal Court and the Almeida, by contrast, are in the midst of street life, accessible to pedestrians and surrounded by shops, bars and restaurants.) Few people walk to these imperious complexes: you reach them by tube or by driving your car into large parking garages, like at a shopping mall. But British theater centers make visiting American professionals turn green. (Even Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont pales by contrast.) Bookshops, restaurants, child care centers, cinema clubs, art galleries, handsome informative programs, a variety of stages, live music in production and, above all, hordes of people intent on nothing but playgoing—these are perquisites that few American theaters can boast.

Still, these portentous buildings do create something of a barrier to adventurous work, and the current establishment theater repertory, though often of high quality, lacks real excitement. Richard Eyre and Adrian Noble are each capable directors and administrators, but their theaters seem like institutional tourist meccas when compared with Laurence Olivier's National and the RSC under Peter Hall. At the Old Vic, Olivier and his literary manager, Kenneth Tynan, were always alert to new directions in British theater. At the Aldwych, Peter Hall and associates like Peter Brook not only radically reinterpreted Shakespeare but created a home for Pinter, Arden, Weiss, Genet and Bond. When you consider that arteriosclerosis set in at the National only after Hall, succeeding Olivier, moved to his "concrete Colditz" bunker, and at the RSC after Trevor Nunn abandoned the Aldwych for the Barbican, it's tempting to conclude that the problem is at least partly architectural.

Unlike the National, the RSC still maintains a permanent ensemble of actors, and though the company still features new plays from time to time, it is essentially devoted to classics. I saw three of these RSC productions on my last visit to London: *Hamlet*, Alexander Ostrovsky's *Artists and Admirers* and *Richard III* (which had moved from Stratford to the Donmar Warehouse).

Of these, Adrian Noble's Edwardian **Hamlet** was by far the most engrossing. An uncut, four hour and twenty minute version (which allowed a five-minute break after the first two hours, and a fifteen-minute interval after the first three), it proved to be not the endurance test one expected. Rather, it was a continuously fresh rethinking of the text. Like a number of contemporary British directors, Noble manages to make Shakespearean verse sound newly written. He has borrowed a few effects and ideas from his former associate Ron Daniels, whose similarly updated *Hamlet* with Mark Rylance was performed a few years ago at the RSC (and more recently at my own theater). But otherwise Noble follows no established conventions or traditions, treating the play like an unsolicited script that just popped into the literary office. The result is a style of almost cinematic naturalism, embellished by radical interpretations of text, character and relationships.

With a strong cast, designs of eloquent simplicity by the gifted Bob Crowley, sharp lighting by Alan Burrett and ferocious music by Guy Woolfenden, Noble had everything required for a memorable *Hamlet* except a memorable Hamlet. This is another of Kenneth Branagh's attempts to lay claim to Olivier's roles, the first being his stirring movie of *Henry V*. It is not an equal success. Branagh is essentially a rhetorical actor, with a megaphonic voice that makes him seem marooned in Noble's naturalistic world. Excessively concerned with articulation, he appears embarrassed by the more emotional soliloquies, passages he invariably rushes. He whines through a self-pitying "To be or not to be," and his death scene is empty.

Only in the closet scene does Branagh display convincing feeling (disgust with his mother), though he rises well to the flourishes of "Oh what a rogue and peasant slave" and the pyrotechnics of the Pyrrhus speech (this is the first Hamlet I've witnessed more hammy than the Player King). Branagh's Prince is not an appealing figure. Neither was Peter Stormare in Bergman's version of the play, but that was deliberate. Quite simply, Branagh lacks the requisite style and nobility. He has the manner of a Sotheby auctioneer and a face like potato pudding. What does he do on "But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue"? He adjusts his waistcoat.

That this *Hamlet* nonetheless holds our attention is a tribute to Noble's meticulous direction and the confidence of the other performers. Clifford Rose's stumble-footed Ghost is a specter in white who raises his arm through the ground (*Carrie*-style) in the swearing scene. Joanne Pearce's Ophelia, a play-

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ful young feminist, expresses both her high spirits and, later, her erotic dementia at the piano. Jane Lapotaire's Gertrude is a slightly dotty matron, though appealing enough to stimulate the lust of John Shrapnel's dapper and forceful Claudius. David Bradley's Polonius has the disapproving scowl of a Yankee banker, while Richard Bonneville's Laertes looks like a self-satisfied stockbroker. As for Richard Moore's First Gravedigger, he is apparelled like a Victorian undertaker, and Guy Henry's Osric is a fop in spats. It is a tribute to this intelligent, well-fashioned production that it can be honestly described with a cliché: you think you're seeing the play for the very first time.

Which is more than I can say for the RSC version of **Richard III** at the Donmar Warehouse. The child of my companion, baffled by Roman numerals, misread the title as "Richard One Hundred and Eleven," and that's how often I felt I'd seen it after this laborious production. (Happily for my disposition toward the play, the 110th Richard was Ian McKellen's.) At this performance, I should confess, the celebrated actor Simon Russell Beale, suffering from a slipped disc, had been replaced in the title role by a badly cast understudy. But the rest of the actors were sufficiently boring, and Sam Mendes's directional concept enervating enough, to conclude that the replacement wasn't the major misfortune.

Paradoxically, the same naturalistic approach that distinguished the RSC *Hamlet* sabotaged its *Richard III*. In the extremely intimate space of the Donmar Warehouse, where the most significant object in Tim Hatley's bare design is a huge incandescent light bulb, the play is directed with the ostentatious simplicity of a movie. The performers, costumed in Brechtian uniforms and jackboots, are devoted to "being" rather than acting, which is to say suppressing any high emotion or heroic behavior. For a play so dependent on lamentation, on "telltale women" raving and moaning, this is to rob it of its affective center. Gone, too, is any hint of regality—even Richard's crown is made of cardboard. The result is utter blandness and affected ordinariness, when the play is nothing without its powerful, riveting melodrama. Mendes scatters a few ideas through the evening. Each time someone is killed, for example, his eyes are closed. But this is a "people's" version of *Richard III*, where all the characters are democratized, and none of the actors is permitted to betray a hint of imagination or invention.

Artists and Admirers is a work that reads a lot better than it plays at the Pit Theater in the Barbican. English actors, who tend to colonialize foreign sounds into their own tongue, have even more difficulty with Slavic inflections than with French or German. It's disconcerting to hear talk of rubles by people more comfortable with pounds and pence and to listen to Russian patronymics pronounced in cockney accents (a previous Russian work I saw in London was delivered in Scottish burrs). Ostrovsky's 1882 play is based on his long experience with the theater. It is, in fact, partly a comment on the censorship that he experienced as a writer for the stage, though it is even more concerned with the hard financial lot of actresses.

Aleksandra Nikolavna Negina, known as Sasha, is an actress with a provincial troupe, preparing for her benefit. Actors' salaries being extremely low, such supplements were essential to save them from poverty. Although Sasha has a fiancé, a poor teacher, she is being wooed by a prince and also by a landowner, who offers to pay her 500 rubles for the benefit. By the end of the play, she has abandoned them all, having determined that although an actress exists not simply to create but to be admired and loved, talent is better than wealth or happiness. To her disappointed fiancé, she says, "I am an actress—but you wanted me to be a heroine." She cannot live without the theater.

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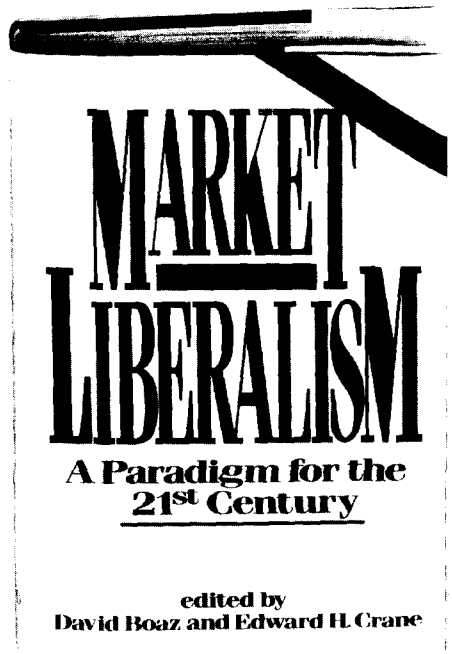

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There are rough sketches here for Nina in *The Seagull* and Lopahin in *The Cherry Orchard*, but the actress playing Sasha, with her poached-egg eyes and pinched demeanor, would have been better cast as Varya, or perhaps Sonya in *Uncle Vanya*. Ostrovsky understands the frustrations of trying to create theater in the provinces—"Is art really understood here? Is art really needed here?" asks the troupe's despondent stage manager. But these questions seem out of place in an urban culture center like the Barbican, and this RSC production, under the direction of Phyllida Lloyd, contains no particular urgency. Not finding much appeal in the actors, I had trouble staying with the play. *Artists and Admirers* seems to have been chosen primarily to fill out the season schedule.

The poor acting quality of *Richard III* and *Artists and Admirers* is, I suspect, an aberration. The overall level of competence at the Royal Shakespeare Company is probably adequate enough. It's the level of inspiration that's low. Although most can hold a stage with confidence, there are few actors in these companies to match the legendary figures of the past. What is even more sorely missing from the stages of the RSC and the National, however, is dramaturgical imagination. The new plays are unexciting, the modern revivals are insipid and the classics are anthology favorites, recycled in new versions from season to season. It is true that directors such as Stephen Daldry, Declan Donnellan, Deborah Warner and Richard Jones, working in tandem with inspired designers, have been opening up English audiences to European theatrical concepts, linking the nation's theater, for the first time, to an artistic common market. But there's still something vacant in these establishment buildings. I think what the English theater most needs, to bust through the architectural barriers, is just one visionary playwright who could change the way people think about the stage. •

Class Secretary

BY ANDREW DELBANCO

Three Lives by Louis Auchincloss

(Houghton Mifflin, 213 pp., $21.95)

Louis Auchincloss: A Writer's Life by Carol Gelderman

(Crown, 287 pp., $25)

Who is this man with impassive eyes and posture so straight that one feels rebuked just looking at his photograph? His greatest transgressions, according to a polite new biography by Carol Gelderman, were throwing a stone at a passing train while he was a first-former at Groton and, later at Yale, wearing bulky DaPinna suits instead of the sleeker styles from Brooks Brothers and Rogers Peet. In his own reserved way Louis Auchincloss belongs to a lineage of New York writers—stretching from Walt Whitman to Tom Wolfe—who have cultivated public trademarks by which they might stand out from the blur of the crowd. Auchincloss's mark is not a long beard or a white suit, but an icy patrician look that makes him seem groomed by a taxidermist. He has cultivated the image of the WASP as an endangered species.

He comes, of course, from an old family—except that it is not really old (even by American standards) compared with the Winthrops and the Dudleys and the Saltonstalls, and not quite economically potent like the Astors and the Vanderbilts and the du Ponts. It is a semipedigreed family. One voluble in-law, Gore Vidal, proposed some years ago a series of bitchy questions that could only have come from a relative attached by marriage:

> I can recall various quasi-humorous rebellions on the part of the in-laws at the clan gathering in New York. What the in-laws could never understand was the source of the family's self-esteem. After all, what had they ever done? And didn't they come to America a bit late by true "aristocratic" standards? And hadn't they been peddlers back in Scotland who had then gone into *dry goods* in New York?

Family, however, has never been a joke to Auchincloss. It is his obsession. As a child he loved to read about the doomed French aristocracy, and he learned their kinship charts by heart. Now, at the age of 75, he has published a new novella, "The Epicurean" (one of *Three Lives*), which is about the self-delusion of a man who thinks he can walk away from his stoic heritage and reinvent himself as a connoisseur of pleasure. It does not work: he is, like Auchincloss himself, too much the child of his progenitors.

Unfortunately, Gelderman's book does not do much to get behind the proprieties of this clannish writer. It reads at times like an annotated curriculum vitae, as if her subject were sitting beside her in his Park Avenue living room, coaching her on details and shaking his head when she gets too close to a nerve—as when she speculates about his prolonged years of bachelorhood, or about his bout of psychoanalysis: he "refuses to discuss the actual content of his own analysis except in the most general terms, and this is not because he cannot remember."

What does emerge from this guarded dictation is the story of a moneyed young man with a spiritual and vocational crisis that had begun already in the late 1920s, when he was a child. This story, in many variants, is at the heart of Auchincloss's plots—doubtless because, as he himself has said, "all a novelist's characters are himself." Sedentary and ruminative, the boy was actually a bad fit in the mold his family had prepared for him. He was uneasy in the sporty prep-school culture that was—and remains—the traditional training ground for his caste; "from the morning bell and my pail of icy water," says one of his fictional narrators (about a school very like Auchincloss's own, Groton), "to evening prayers and the threat of a turtle in my bed, life was a series of hideous apprehensions." Recoiling from the heartiness and the hazing, he was drawn to eccentric literary types who were willing to pop the bubble of pretension: "What the prep schools are good at is bringing along the dumb guys," says one candid preppy. "They have enough faculty to give individual tutoring. But now they won't take the dumb guys. So what's the use of them?"

After Groton, it was another family school—Yale, whose class of 1939 included Cyrus Vance, William Scranton, William Bundy and other future eminences. But he left Yale without his B.A., going on to take a law degree at the University of Virginia. Then, after a promising start at Sullivan and Cromwell (whose most famous partner, John Foster Dulles, vented a sarcasm about his

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young associate's penchant for writing on company time), he left prematurely again—this time to try the life of a professional novelist. "The best way," says one of the narrators of *The Rector of Justin* (1964), "for the passive man to overtake his more active brothers is to write them up."

"Writing them up" has been Auchincloss's calling ever since, although in 1954 he returned to the law as an estate and trust attorney in a smaller firm, as if acquiescing halfway to the family principle that "my real destiny, my serious destiny, my destiny as a man, was to become a lawyer and submit to the same yoke to which my poor father had so long and patiently submitted." His half-life as a writer (to which his father initially "objected on the grounds that [it] would do him no good on Wall Street") has been conducted with a businessman's efficiency. After composing his first drafts in longhand, he has them typed triple-spaced, then carries them about wherever he goes—on the subway, the bus, to the office—and performs the work of revision automatically, "like knitting."

Over nearly half a century he has produced almost fifty books this way. In recent years he has taken to reworking old manuscripts (his 1990 novel, *The Lady of Situations*, is based on material originally composed in the 1930s at Yale), and some of *Three Lives* has this same feeling of refurbishment or reprise. But with Auchincloss there is not exactly any "early" or "late"; it would take an uncommonly fine ear to date his books by their style. Unlike his master Henry James, he is a writer without development.

His basic theme has never changed. It is the corrosion of the character of his class, which seems always to be sliding away from its original virtue until "form [takes precedence] over substance,... technique over action," and each generation becomes increasingly "derivative rather than inspired, clever rather than forceful." This degradation is the subject of his best-known book, *The Rector of Justin*, in which the upright Dr. Prescott (the headmaster modeled loosely on Groton's great Endicott Peabody) builds his school as a neo-Romanesque fortress, following the "Christian tradition of days when the faith was not wholly secure from pagan assault." What Prescott discovers, however, is that the barbarians are not in front of the gates: they are, disguised as proper WASPs, already within them. Prescott's probity and courage, which have a New England Calvinist tinge in the tradition of Phillips Brooks, prove to be untransmittable to the rising

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money men of New York, who send their children to him not to learn what he means to teach them, but to learn how to turn the impudent rage of adolescence into effective ambition.

The question that arises from this theory of declension is whether this brand of public responsibility ever really existed in more than a handful of exceptional men. Auchincloss clearly wants to think so. Yet he harbors a self-subversive awareness that it may always have been a phantom. As his beloved Edith Wharton put it in *The Age of Innocence* (1920), all the talk about a New York aristocracy is "modern newspaper rubbish" because "New York has always been a commercial community" and "our grandfathers and great-grandfathers were just ... merchants who came to the colonies to make their fortune and stayed here because they did so well." Auchincloss can recall no specific time or place (unless it is Prescott's ancestral New England) in which the self was considered damned by untempered selfishness. The society of his beloved "Vanderbilt Era" was, after all,

> a society where the men cared mostly for business and sport, and the women for dress and parties. The same might have been said of the older Knickerbocker society with which it had merged, but the activities of the latter had been conducted on too modest a scale to be much noted by the world at large.

LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

How far back, then, does one have to go to find the moral touchstone? Even the original Puritan Winthrops, a family to which Auchincloss is related through the web of marriage, cannot bequeath a durable righteousness to their descendants. In a series of stories (*The Winthrop Covenant*, 1976), he traces the decline of their "preoccupying sense ... of a mission, presumably divinely inspired, toward their fellow men," until it becomes mere politeness.

Yet even if this "preoccupying ... mission" did once exist, one wonders how long it remained capacious before it became merely tribal. A clue to an answer may be found in Auchincloss's own summary of his 1968 novel, *A World of Profit*—a book about the advent of modern times, when "there is no accepted code of what is right and wrong, [when] marital infidelity, financial fraud, even violence have become acceptable, [when] about the only thing which is morally wrong is racial discrimination." There is a detectable sneer—a shudder at the final triumph of the democratic dogma—behind this comment that voguish disapproval of "racial discrimination" has become, in our fallen world, the last acknowledged sin.

The unwashed rabble (formerly written off as "the newer races," but now not so easily dismissed) are mostly a blur in Auchincloss's books, barely glimpsed on the seedy streets around "one of the cultural institutions enshrined behind white columns in the complex of buildings unhappily far north at 155th Street on the Hudson ... [where] the collection was priceless, the endowment tiny, the public absent." When they do stray downtown, they are greeted with horror, as when one of Prescott's disciples has a moment of flustered shame at his spontaneous fear while "a group of rather rowdy Negro boys, in red and yellow jackets, shoved their way" into his subway car, "jostling and pushing the other passengers, laughing loudly and using rough language":

> What distressed me was that in the heat and closeness, listening to the high laughs and the crude remarks, I momentarily lost my faith.... I thought: How could God want all the creatures in that car, including myself (oh, yes, including myself), to enter into eternal life? It was not that those cackling boys were wicked, but whatever they were, good or bad, the point struck at me that a mortal lifetime seemed quite as long as one could want for them.

The shock of this confession is blunted by its candor, and through such passages one recognizes that the best instinct of Auchincloss's class—call it Christian charity or civic philanthropy—has always been in competition with a basic revulsion toward the creatures it regards as needy.

Another way to put this is to say that human worthiness is measured in this tradition by the quality of one's manners. "The moral person," Auchincloss once remarked on a television program, "usually has quite good manners because good manners are usually some sort of basic consideration." There is, in this connection, a rather touching account in Gelderman's biography of his late wife's efforts to establish a summer program in the New York City parks for poor children: "We saw kids ... playing baseball in the bird sanctuary," she explained, "so we had to teach them what a bird sanctuary was, so they would play elsewhere."

This impulse to lift the lowly out of their moral squalor—a combination of educational fervor and an offended sense of order—has been at the heart of Protestant reform in the United States from the antebellum years through the Social Gospel and the Progressive movement of our own century. For Auchincloss it is a personal manifestation of the best values of his class—discipline, duty and, in some half-sacrificial, half-narcissistic way, a kind of American noblesse oblige. In this instance it results in a laudable public work; but it is also an

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old habit of teaching the barbarians to behave. Auchincloss's books are finally about the dissipation of these commitments in the boardrooms of Wall Street and in the increasingly insular world of the East Side "burghers," where, by the time he reaches our own day in such novels as *The Diary of a Yuppie* (1986) and *The Golden Calves* (1988), there are no manners left, and the unwashed hordes are left to go to hell.

It should be said that Auchincloss has usually issued his jeremiads without blaming the moral decline of his class on outsiders. He softens the specific revulsion of the jostled man on the subway into a general disapproval of vulgarity; and though he insists that good morals have traditionally meant good manners, his best books demonstrate that the converse—good manners mean good morals—does not hold.

It is in this acknowledgment that one senses the survival of Auchincloss the brooding boy who was never fully comfortable in the genteel world of his birth. To the extent that he sustains this uneasy insight, he becomes a writer worth reading—as when he reports the absurdity of the petty rituals ("the gossipy chatter of the spa, the noisy matutinal reunions of the beach club") by which his "old boys" and matrons relive their days as football heroes and debutantes. One of the most charming moments in his fiction comes in *The House of the Prophet* (1974) when, in the hushed public lounge of a first-class nursing home, the half-senile Felix Leitner (a slightly disguised version of Auchincloss's friend and client, Walter Lippmann) shocks a group of somber visitors by explaining the real reason that Wallis Simpson could never have become Queen of the English:

> They could never have stomached the fact that there were two living men who would have been privileged to state, even in the sacred precincts of a gentlemen's club and without risk of being called out or expelled: "I've fucked the Queen of England."

"The effect on the listening circle," the narrator reports with satisfaction, "was as if somebody had broken wind."

In moments like this, we hear from the part of Auchincloss that hates the tinkling-glass murmur of stiff parlor talk—the part that is fed up with the smugness he has known all his life. Having visited, while in the Navy, the bomb site at Nagasaki, he reacted, for instance, with the comment that "the man who can contemplate the hospital, large as Bellevue . . . gutted from one end to the other, in a single moment, and say 'it's all for the best' must have a giant faith in the victory formula of the Anglo-Saxon world."

Yet despite these capacities for candor and for a kind of family shame, he ultimately reserves his coldest contempt for the insolent young who are disloyal to the rites of their elders—a disloyalty of which he himself has felt accused. It is as if his return to the law was a self-inflicted penance for his own apostasy—for his having become a commentator rather than an undivided participant in the prescribed life of business and "society." This fundamental contradiction—a kind of chronic nausea at the pretensions and demands of his class, yet a ferocious final loyalty to it—is what distinguishes his work from mere class apologetics. It is also what limits it. He is like the matriarch who is shrewish to her children but who will pulverize any outsider who dares to hint disapproval of anyone in her brood.

The clearest sign of this bottom-line class solidarity is the very language of his fiction. He populates his novels with blustering men who say "see here" and "I say" and "bully" and "by Jove," and he writes in a defensively prescriptive style that is never far from schoolmarmishness—full of formal constructions such as "I am become." He likes to use certain words—"competence," for instance—to convey class-specific meanings. "A small competence" means, in his world, not a limited skill, but a modest

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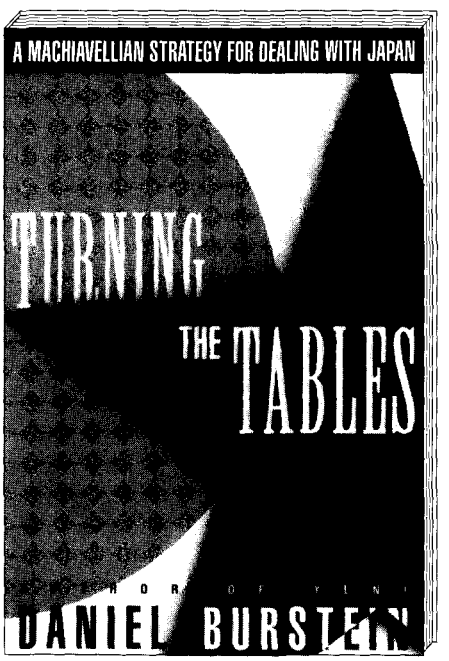

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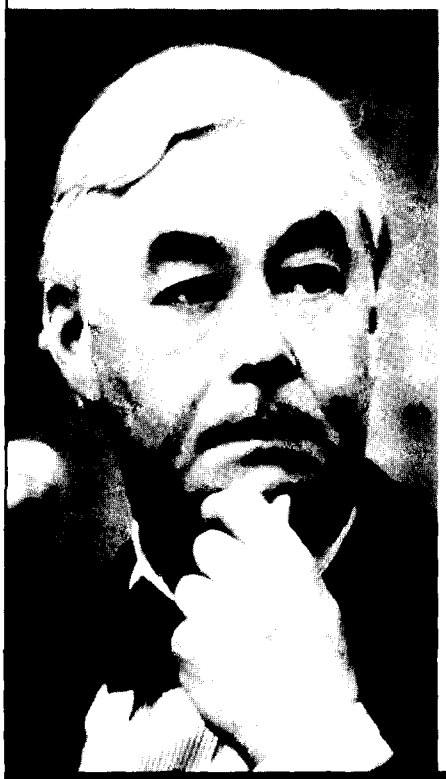

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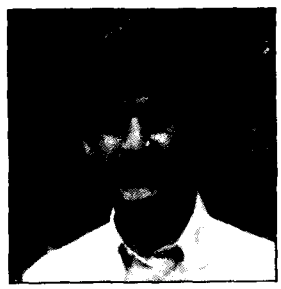

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inheritance. And he can fill a little preposition with a lot of disdain: "I identify myself," says one character, "in the plight of Richard Nixon." This pedantic "in" (the colloquial "with" just will not do) is the stylistic equivalent of an upturned nose.

Having never outgrown his preoccupation with his old-money crowd, when Auchincloss turns with disgust to the new self-made predators of Wall Street—in, for example, *The Diary of a Yuppie*—the language gets coarse. The old rules, we are asked to believe, have had a long reign but now suddenly no longer apply: a successful lawyer, panicked at the onset of middle-age paunch, throws off the senior partner's daughter whom he had married twenty years before as a career move, but whose "huge ass and stringy tits [now] proved too much" for him. When he ends up in bed with a fresh young associate, one of his colleagues draws the moral of the story: it "shows that there *is* something stronger than ambition." Yet the only historical novelty here is the openness of the infidelity. We know that gentlemen of bygone days did not cleave to their wives. We know that they humped their mistresses with as much ardor as today's coke-sniffing yuppie. If sex is stronger than ambition in the world of getting and spending, so it has always been.

More usually, however, sex is a weaker motive than greed in Auchincloss's world. Women's bodies, revealed, tend to disappoint; the flesh on the buttocks gives "way under my groping fingers as if it had been cotton on sticks." Without much taste for the physical urgencies of the young, he writes authoritatively about juiceless people—men and women—who think during sex about arbitrage or home decoration; and he deals especially well, as did James, with the infirm and the old. The account of the dying days of the headmaster's wife in *The Rector of Justin*—which owes a good deal to James's portrait of Miss Birdseye in *The Bostonians*—is genuinely moving. His plots are typically concerned with the growing loneliness of old men and women who have toed the line of duty all their lives, only to discover too late in their hour of need that they are without human recourse. Sometimes he follows the consequences of this belatedness into the next generation and writes of the effects on their love-starved children.

It is when he writes from the point of view of women, however, rather than about their function from the strategic vantage point of men, that Auchincloss is at his best. There is, for instance, a finely wrought scene in *Portrait in Brown-*

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stone (1962) told from the point of view of an adolescent girl who is sharing with her grandmother an ocean liner stateroom. Shuddering at the prospect that she must witness the old woman stripped of the wig that conceals her residue of thin, limp hair, she is immensely relieved when

> Grandma, using a sheet and several towels with the dexterity of an accomplished seamstress ... hooked up a little tent that enshrouded her dressing table ... [until] she emerged, like a sheik, in a big white cap and billowing white wrapper, more clothed than when she had gone in. I sighed in relief and went to sleep. The trip had started well.

This is proficient writing; it conveys a young girl's horror at being privy to an old woman's indignity. There is too much prophecy in the sight. Again and again Auchincloss seems most comfortable when reporting a woman's voice and feelings. He is on key when he follows the slowly dying spirit of rebellion in rich girls growing up in a world that still honors the principle of dowry. From the first kiss, they are handled with an air of possession by men who seek to purchase them as tickets to social position, and later we see them submitting—sometimes bitterly, sometimes with dignity—to the fact that they are thickening and losing their youth before the desire of their man subsides. It is through such Jamesian portraits of women that Auchincloss best conveys the hurt that sooner or later afflicts even his insulated rich—the terrible discovery that the self is worthless when separated from what it owns.

Oddly enough, it was in the 1960s that the themes of this Park Avenue writer—the transient impudence of the young, the fall of the old into obsolescence—achieved their strongest resonance outside his limited social circle. The '60s were his best decade; *The Rector of Justin* and *The Embezzler* (1966), both nominated for the National Book Award, sold in the millions. Perhaps it was only then—when the decline of manners was a kind of continuous public spectacle—that he could be read not so much as the secretary of an exclusive social club, but as a writer whose world in decay seemed an allegory for us all. Since then, at least from the evidence adduced in Gelderman's biography, he has remained a man of unimpeachable courtesy, with little resentment—at least not of the open sort—over what must feel like the superannuation of his reputation.

Reading him now, as he moves through his declining years, puts me in mind of the time when I went as a child with my family to Martha's Vineyard, which was the summer playground for intellectuals and politicians of Auchincloss's vintage and class. Near our hotel a tall, elderly man with a Victorian mustache, aloof and reserved by comparison to the other beach-goers, took a daily walk to the Edgartown lighthouse. He would climb onto the concrete abutment that surrounds the lighthouse, and sit with his back against the curved white wall, looking for hours with a half-proprietary, half-desolate stare out to sea. He seemed, at least to me then, oddly serene and sad.

I learned later that this man was Dean Acheson, Yale '15, son of an Episcopal bishop, and architect of our postwar containment policy—arguably the last American secretary of state who can be said to have reorganized the world more or less at will. This man, I realize now, is Auchincloss's idea of the American aristocrat, at least as he wants to remember him: committed with unassailable confidence to the dissemination of his values, yet peculiarly vulnerable to the shock of learning the limits of his power against time and the recalcitrant world. The history of American foreign policy in the last fifty years could be narrated, after all, as a family debate among such men. The interventionist Franklin Roosevelt was as much a product of Peabody's Groton as were the isolationist Republican alumni who reviled him; and the same Yankee tradition produced both Cyrus Vance and George Bush.

Such men, reduced to small scale in Auchincloss's fiction by his essentially domestic imagination, come face to face, if not to terms, with their dispossession. With an odd mixture of relief and foreboding, one follows them to the exit and wonders who is coming in to take their place. Auchincloss makes his readers question whether our culture can any longer be said to "nurture" or "cultivate" or "issue" (such archaic verbs seem at home in his lexicon) any sort of normative character. If so, what is it? If not, what proportion of lamentation and celebration ought to coexist in our acknowledgment that the old Protestant ruling class is defunct?

If Auchincloss is finally a small writer, it is not because he raises these questions. They are not trivial questions. He disappoints because his fiction cherishes a gracious past that never was. And in respect to any vision of the future, his work is a dry well.

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Strange Attachments

By Michael Ignatieff

Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity by Liah Greenfeld

(Harvard University Press, 581 pp., $49.95)

Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany by Rogers Brubaker

(Harvard University Press, 352 pp., $35)

Liberals are too often surprised and dismayed by the stubborn vitality of nationalism. For two centuries, many liberal thinkers have predicted that the global market would eventually erase the quaint patchwork of national economies and nation-states, but national feeling shows no sign of being washed away by the globalizing tide. Now that the imperial templates that kept order in Europe since Yalta have burst asunder, nationalism has returned yet again, in ruder political health than ever, and certainly in more exuberant form than Western liberalism.

Since the old incorrigible keeps returning, liberals should be asking themselves whether there is not something wrong with a view of the world that finds itself always surprised and dismayed. Philosophical conservatives, after all, are not similarly perplexed. Their politics has always glorified the roots of national belonging, the attachment to "the little platoon," as Burke called it. (Conservatives, to be sure, have also abused the power of national feeling, in a way that liberals have not.) Liberals have had more of an explanatory problem because of their noble though quixotic desire to construe civic attachment to the nation as a matter of rational persuasion rather than prerational belonging.

For many liberals, nationalism is an irrational atavism. Yet the idea of atavism—a "strange recurrence to a primitive past"—presumes a commitment to an idea of progress. Only liberals convinced that Western democracy is the "end of history" can be secure in their conviction that nationalism is a reversion to a more primitive and barbarous stage of political development. Nationalism looks like an atavism only if one lives, to use Isaiah Berlin's phrase, in a "sated" nation, that is, in one of the small number of nations with a state of their own, recognized borders, and no suffering minority beyond their territory. (And, obviously, a willingness to be sated, and no need to expand.) Everywhere else, the classic nationalist discontents and demands—for a state, for an end to imperial rule, for the return of "lost" territories or "lost" peoples to the national homeland—remain as burning and as actual as ever.

Even liberals from "sated" nations who can bring themselves to feel the justice of nationalist grievances in "hungry" nations continue to feel that such fervor is underpinned by a basic misapprehension about the sort of personal identity appropriate to the modern age. A modern person, many liberals believe, ought to be an ironist, especially toward a corny emotion like love of country. To a modern ironist, there is no clear line between patriotism and nationalism, between a corny emotion and a dangerous one. The one leads necessarily to the other.

For some postwar liberal thinkers, seeking to grasp the causes and the consequences of Hitler, the very idea of a liberal nationalism has seemed a contradiction in terms. Yet before Hitler, indeed for much of the history of nationalism, it was a liberal, that is to say, an emancipatory, ideal. As Liah Greenfeld shows in her exhilaratingly ambitious and thoughtful study, liberal democracy and modern nationalism spring from the same original sources in sixteenth-century Britain. The idea of "nation" in England was associated from the beginning with the idea of the people and with the concept of popular sovereignty. "Nationalism," she writes, "was the form in which democracy appeared in the world."

The Stuart kings encouraged this usage so long as it enabled them to enlist the aristocracy and the common people in the Reformation struggle against the Catholic Church. Yet the idea of the nation was antithetical in principle to the conception of the realm as the personal patrimony of the monarch. In Elizabeth's reign, nascent national pride coalesced around the person of the monarch, but under the later Stuarts the conflict between the popular conception of sovereignty and the monarchical one had to be fought through to a bitter conclusion in the Civil War. Despite the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the idea of the nation as a collection of citizens who were the source of sovereignty and authority was firmly established in the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

The basic plot of Greenfeld's book is that the idea of the nation emerged as civil society's ideological counterweight to the rising power of the Tudor and Stuart monarchies; but her story tails off at the Restoration, leaving unsolved the question of how the British monarchy managed thereafter to draw its sting. She does observe that in the eighteenth century British national feeling coalesced around a conservative particularism in which the monarchy, rather than "we the people," emerged as the symbolic center of national feeling. How and why this occurred she does not say, perhaps because she neglects the galvanizing effect upon popular patriotism of Britain's warlike rise to empire.

While British constitutional patriotism increasingly jettisoned its republican past, Britain's American subjects remained true to its inspiration. When the Americans revolted in 1776, Greenfeld argues, they were simply behaving as freeborn Englishmen reclaiming their rights as a nation from the usurpations of the crown. In resurrecting the British idea of the nation as a commonwealth of rights-bearing civic equals, the Americans helped launch the "individualistic-libertarian" variant of nationalism, what I would call civic nationalism, upon the modern world.

Greenfeld's analysis allows one to see just what is wrong with that strain of liberal thinking that views nationalism as a form of atavism. For Greenfeld, nationalism was the primary ideological solvent of the society of orders and of the idea of the realm as the patrimony of the monarch. Greenfeld might have put more emphasis on nationalism's role as an ideology, which secularized the Christian conception of the Church as a community and applied it, for the first time, to the territorial state. Michelet once observed that the idea of the nation arose to fill "the immeasurable abyss" that the extinction of Christianity

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and the departure of God had left behind in the hearts of men. The idea of the nation emerged in Reformation Europe to replace the conception of social community smashed by the breakup of confessional uniformity and the emergence within society of religious schism.

Nationalism was also a new vernacular of human pride and dignity. It allowed those dismissed by the aristocracy as rabble or *canaille* to attain self-respect as members of the nation. It provided the poor with a new self-image as well as a new political personality, even if it did nothing to cure their poverty. Instead of seeing nationalism, as Ernest Gellner does, as the "product" or "reflection" of modernization, Greenfeld sees nationalism as the ideological drive-wheel of modernity. The modernizing energies of nationalism are far from spent. To this day it remains a potent rallying cry for any elite seeking to unite their people around the enterprise of modernization (though many elites in many modernizing societies have used nationalism as a cover for their own depredations).

For Greenfeld, the story about how civic nationalism turns into ethnic nationalism is the story of what happens to the Anglo-Saxon idea of the nation when it reaches the European continent in the seventeenth century. The idea of the nation was taken up by the French nobility in their struggle against the monarchy of Louis XIV, and by Jansenists and Huguenots struggling for freedom against the Gallican Church. Religious dissenters and noblemen used the word "nation" to vest themselves with a principle of legitimacy and authority distinct from the monarchy. Having entered French political discourse in the protests of the Parliament and the polemics of the Jansenists, the idea of the nation mutated into the idea of popular sovereignty and became the ideological instrument that brought down the Bourbon monarchy.

In the crucible of the French Revolution, with the nation in danger from external and internal enemies, the concept acquired a newly collectivist dimension. "From a politically charged metaphor, a name for the association of free, rational individuals, it turned into a superhuman collective person. In England it was the liberty of the individuals who composed it that made the nation free. In France it was the liberty of the nation that constituted the freedom of the individuals." It was the Germans, not the French, who completed the transformation of civic nationalism into ethnic nationalism. For Greenfeld, as for dozens of historians before her, ethnic nationalism was the invention of the German Romantic intelligentsia who embraced everything German in patriotic reaction against the Napoleonic invasion and the French Enlightenment's vision of political society as a society of contractual equals.

In the process of exalting Germanness—it represented a universal culture of feeling that could beat back the cold and mechanical individualism of the Enlightenment—the Romantic intelligentsia constituted themselves as the true voice of the nation. Nationalism, in other words, gave the intelligentsia a status and an identity within the traditional German society of orders. A nationalist creed, intended to defend the established order against the French, then unleashed aspirations for unification and change that dissolved the status hierarchy and the German princedoms. For the Romantics, the new principle of social authority was the *Volk*, a highly idealized and abstracted image of the German people. This *Volk*, simple, clean, pure, ardently communitarian, was the happy projection of an unhappy intelligentsia, seeking a focus of emotional loyalty antithetical to everything they were themselves. The *Volk* was the decisive ethnic twist given to the French idea of *la nation*.

But there were interesting differences. In France, Britain and America, nationalism served as a modernizing ideology. In Germany, it expressed the German intelligentsia's envy and resentment at the emergence of a secular, contractarian democracy in France. German nationalism became a flight from individualism and individual rights toward a collectivist, proto-totalitarian vision of society in which the individual achieved inner freedom through submission and obedience to the will of the *Volk*.

Greenfeld's genealogy of ethnic nationalism in Germany is hardly original, and neither is her insistence on an uninterrupted line of continuity between the Romantics and Hitler. Still, it fails to convince. For one thing, the Romantic matrix of ideas was more ambiguous than Greenfeld allows. How, exactly, does one derive Hitler from Herder, at least from the Herder who famously remarked, "So at bottom all comparison is out of place. Every nation has its center of happiness within itself"? Hitler's expansionary and aggressive nationalism was a universalizing creed; Germany was to be the standard of comparison for all. But that is exactly what Herder's historicizing and relativizing idea of national consciousness denied.

The problem is not merely that

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romanticism points toward and away from Hitler. The problem is that the Romantics made some telling criticisms of the Enlightenment, and Greenfeld is so hostile to the Romantic project that she refuses to engage with them. Surely the Romantics were right to see some shallowness in liberal contractualism and to emphasize that self-interest often compares poorly in fact with ethnic tradition and culture as a motive for civic solidarity. The very success of liberal contractualism in Britain and America depended on the ethnic homogeneity of the societies involved, not to mention the scrupulous exclusion of natives, blacks and women from political rights. This manufactured ethnic homogeneity made self-interest convergent, made the vision of liberal contractualism appear a plausibly warm vision of communitarianism. To this day, liberal civic nationalism works effectively only in societies that have dominant ethnic majorities (as in France or Britain) or that are so abundant (as in America) that ethnic competition can be contained and attenuated.

If this is so, then why, given that the Germans were just as ethnically homogeneous as the Anglo-Saxons in this period, should the ethnic component in German nationalism come to loom so large? The one significant exception to German ethnic homogeneity in 1815 was the Jewish population, and Greenfeld dwells on the significantly anti-Semitic turn of some German Romantics. Yet the genocidal consequences under Hitler should not lead us to rewrite the history of German nationalism backward, as an obsessional attempt to define the *Volk* in excluding the Jew. In fact, anti-Semitism did not become central to German nationalism until after 1871. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, when ethnic nationalism first took root, the Other for Germans, as Greenfeld emphasizes, was not Jewish, but French.

Ressentiment toward the coldly rationalistic and arrogantly universalizing French, however, cannot explain why the Germans put such special emphasis on their own ethnicity. It is at this point that Rogers Brubaker's concise and elegant comparison of the national identities of France and Germany, and the citizenship policies that flow from them, becomes useful. A reading of Brubaker leaves one feeling that, in one cardinal respect, Greenfeld is facing the wrong way. She is preoccupied with the German-French interaction on the Rhineland frontier, but the Germans had always been just as preoccupied by their eastern border with the Slavic nations.

The huge eastward migration of Germans to the Slavic border marches of the Holy Roman empire left Germans convinced of their own ethnic distinctiveness. The large German communities in the east retained their language, religion and culture; and while in practice much Slavic-German assimilation did take place, Brubaker argues, "The decisive fact for national self-understanding was the assimilation that did not occur." After the partition of Poland in the late eighteenth century, Prussia became a binational state, and from the stubborn refusal of the Catholic Poles to assimilate, both sides concluded that Slavs and Germans were immiscible entities. Poles under German rule did not cease to be Poles. Germans surrounded by Russian peasants might drink their tea from the samovar, but they never ceased to be German.

As Brubaker argues, the eastern frontier

> furnished to the German elite a differentialist, bounded model of nationhood, a feeling for the tenacious maintenance of distinctive ethnonational identities in zones of ethniculturally mixed populations. Germany defined itself as a frontier state, with reference to the German-Slav borderlands, in a way that has no parallel in France.

The historical irony, of course, is that when eastern European and Russian Romantic intellectuals began importing ethnic nationalism from Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, they were bringing home a doctrine originally directed against themselves. They then proceeded to repay the compliment. They turned their ethnic nationalism first against the Germans, who were the imperial power in the region, and then against each other.

Once the German idea of ethnic nationalism was imported into the chaotic ethnic situation of Habsburg Europe, civic nationalism never had much of a chance. It was always bound to be a weaker alternative, because neither the market individualism nor the democratic tradition necessary for a civic nationalism had taken root. Where civic nationalism had an appeal—say, in the writing and the statesmanship of Masaryk—it was chiefly plausible as a postimperial strategy for maintaining ethnic peace. Yet in the world after Versailles, the civic model of sharing rule with strangers was never as intuitively plausible as the ethnic idea of being ruled by your own kind.

In turn, the revival of ethnic nationalism along the Slavic border returned to haunt and to frighten the Germans. German fears of the east were containable only so long as the two German empires, Hohenzollern and Habsburg, kept the Slavs in check. Once these empires disintegrated and a new Slavic empire emerged on their borderlands, led by Lenin and then by Stalin, the old German fear of Slavic barbarism revived, fit for exploitation by Hitler, a man who learned to hate the multiethnicity of his native Vienna as an affront to the natural superiority of the German people.

Even when one has drawn attention to the millennial German fear of the Slavs, the murderous turn taken by German ethnic nationalism under Hitler still remains to be explained. Greenfeld's declamatory generalization that "Germany was ready for the Holocaust from the moment German national identity existed" explains nothing. It has no more substance than the proposition that from the moment modernity existed, with its railways and gas ovens, the Holocaust was ready to happen. What is missing in her story is the reason that ethnic nationalism in Germany defeated its competition. Indeed, she foreshortens the German story by excluding consideration of the available ideological competition.

Here Brubaker offers a more discriminating analysis. One competing model to ethnic nationalism Brubaker calls "state-nationalism." It provided the ideological impetus for the Stein-Hardenberg reforms in Prussia after the Napoleonic defeats and then for the unification project of Bismarck. Unlike the reactionary ethnic nationalism of the Romantics, "state-nationalism" had a strong modernizing impetus and was capable of emulating the best practice of other Western states. The tension between ethnicultural and statist components of German identity finds little place in Greenfeld's analysis. Hitler's achievement was to force together *Reichsnational* and *Volksnational* consciousness into the ideology of German totalitarianism. But this was a new ideological achievement—not, as Greenfeld argues, a mere derivation or continuation of the Romantic lead.

The other competition to ethnic nationalism was provided by German liberalism and by social democracy. Civic nationalism runs through the German liberal tradition from the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848 to Weimar and then to the postwar constitution of the German federal republic. The social democratic tradition was also persistently, if unsuccessfully, opposed to ethnic particularism. Neither German liberalism nor German social democracy proved strong

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enough to stop Hitler. But that does not mean that they deserve exclusion from the history of German nationalism. Because Greenfeld does omit them, she is left with a German story that is one long, grim and featureless march toward Hitler.

While flattening out the narratives of modern German history, Greenfeld's account also makes it impossible to understand postwar debates over German identity, especially the unexpected postwar revival of a liberal and social democratic conscience, evident these past months in the massive street demonstrations against neo-Nazism. This turning against the totalitarian past is inexplicable, unless one grants that there was a weak yet serviceable liberal and social democratic tradition for postwar Germans to reclaim as their own. Brubaker's excellent study is the best available guide to the intellectual background of the current crisis in German self-identity. As his study helps one to understand, the current crisis over asylum-seekers presents Germans with a clear choice between liberal and ethnic self-definitions. Germany's citizenship laws confer citizenship by ethnic origin, while the asylum provisions of its constitution require Germany to provide asylum for political refugees, regardless of their ethnicity.

In guilt and reparation for their ethnic nationalist past, the Germans have made themselves a land of asylum for the persecuted, only to be overwhelmed by a tide of political and economic refugees from the chaos engulfing the Slav lands on their eastern borders. It is not merely the sheer numbers of asylum-seekers that constitute the problem; it is also that postwar liberal Germany saw itself so much as a post-nationalist (or even anti-nationalist) state that it found itself incapable of defining clear national interests in relation to international migration. Guilt and shame, together with a disgust at the very idea of national exclusiveness, have turned out to be an incoherent basis for defining an immigration policy. Thus the asylum crisis is, for German liberals, the first moment in the postwar period when, over a matter of deep moral sensitivity, they will have to renounce the utopia of a post-nationalist state and think more soberly of Germany's national interest.

At the same time, the Turkish, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish immigrations since the 1950s have turned urban Germany into a multiethnic, multicultural society. And this multicultural reality has come up against the deep tradition of German self-understanding as a monoethnic people, as a nation without immigration. Given that this self-understanding was always problematic, most West Germans have simply adjusted or abandoned their image of the *Volk*. But among the Germans of the East, which remained white and unilingual during the Communist era, the multicultural reality of the new Germany has been one of the most disagreeable discoveries of unification.

Unification itself has given a shock to complacent German images of the unity of the *Volk*. The stubborn unfamiliarity of West and East Germans to each other leaves both wondering what this supposedly innate and natural German identity actually consists of. Yet the legal instruments that establish German identity remain defined by the ethnic nationalist past. As Brubaker shows, the criterion of citizenship remains one of ethnic descent on the basis of *jus sanguinis*. This means, in crude terms, that to become a citizen you have to be born German, even if you are not born in Germany. What counts is the ethnic origin of one's parentage. This ethnic conception of citizenship disfranchises the millions of *gastarbeiter* who have settled in Germany since the 1950s, while according a right of return to millions of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe. To most outsiders, and to many Germans, it seems absurd that a Turk, born

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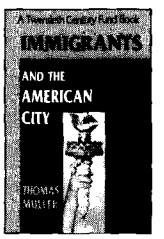

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and brought up in Germany, should be unable to become a citizen, while a German from Siberia, with no history of residence in the country and little language competence, should be entitled to citizenship and to extensive settlement assistance.

The absurdity of German citizenship law is forcing conservative Germans to confront the incoherence, in a modern multicultural world, of grounding national identity in the *Volk*. At the same time, liberal Germans are discovering that a post-national identity built on guilt and reparation is not enough. It is as if both sides are slowly being pushed, by the force of reality, into abandoning a utopia—in the one case, of a Germany for the Germans, in the other, of a Germany open to the whole world.

This ought to be a liberating moment. It ought to be possible for liberals to confront the illusion of believing that a post-national politics is either possible or desirable. Conversely it ought to be possible for conservatives to break free of the lure of the *Volk*. In practical terms, this would mean moving away from a nationalism based on a fiction of ethnic identity toward one based on allegiance to the values of democracy. Yet such moments of opportunity are always moments of danger. The danger is that conservative Germans, confronted with the obvious evidence that what it means to be German has never been less clear, will set out to make it only too clear once again. The only comfort to be drawn from the current revival of neo-Nazism is to observe its complete and utter lack of originality. Contemporary neo-Nazism can only replay the old records, the old speeches over and over again. The contemporary revival lacks anyone with the spirited imagination that made Hitler the diabolically inventive artist in politics that he was. This surely is an early sign that the *Volk* may at last have lost its voice.

And if the *Volk* is losing its voice, it may be because Germany is at last, with unification, passing from a hungry nation to a "sated" nation. Its borders are settled; its lost peoples are coming home. Its task now is not, as some liberals suppose, to pass beyond nationalism altogether and move into bland Europeanism, but to move from the ethnic nationalism of its past to the civic nationalism of a possible future.

The difficulty for "sated" European societies like Germany, as well as Britain and France, for that matter, is that their experience of being societies of in-migration is recent. They are relatively new at a business the Americans have been working at for more than a century: integrating ethnic groups into a civic nationalist patriotic discourse. The chief obstacle to this enterprise lies not with the ethnic minorities themselves, but with conservatives who wish multicultural realities would go away, and with liberals who suppose that patriotism is always the faith of fools.

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF is a columnist for the London *Observer* and the author most recently of *Asya* (Knopf).

The Man with Qualities

BY P. N. FURBANK

Flaubert
by Henri Troyat
translated by Jean Pinkham
(Viking, 374 pp., $25)

Flaubert-Sand: The Correspondence
translated by Francis Steegmuller and Barbara Bray
(Knopf, 428 pp., $35)

Early Writings of Gustave Flaubert
translated by Robert Berry Griffin
(University of Nebraska Press, 275 pp., $30)

Henri Troyat's biography of Flaubert was first published in 1988 and now comes to us in a very efficient translation by Joan Pinkham. Readers of his *Tolstoy* will know what to expect and will not be disappointed: this life of Flaubert is brisk, shapely, well-informed and faintly (as one used to say) Gallic and this-worldly in tone. There is a sentence in it, though, that pulls one up short. "These perpetual conflicts," writes Troyat, who has been listing some of the paradoxes in Flaubert's nature, "made him a profoundly unhappy man."

Of course, if one listened to every groan and piteous lamentation that Flaubert uttered, every one of his ragings against the infinite stupidity of the "bourgeois," his abysmal loneliness, his physical agonies, the unbearable torture of writing and so on, one might come to such a conclusion; one might even feel surprised that he did not drown himself before he was 40. And one ought, indeed, to listen to him. But his own writing teaches us that one ought also to listen to what is not said, and to what prompts him to complain so loudly. For what Flaubert's outcries are really saying is that it is all worth it, twenty times over.

The point is brought home by reading, in an admirable new translation, his marvelous correspondence with George Sand. (The translators, Francis Steegmuller and Barbara Bray, base their edition of the letters on the one compiled by Alphonse Jacobs which appeared in 1981, skillfully remodeling the notes for the Anglo-Saxon reader.) Flaubert writes to George Sand, and it is no vain boast:

> Large natures (and those are the good ones) are above all prodigal, and don't keep such strict account of how they expend themselves. We must laugh and weep, love, work, enjoy and suffer—*vibrate* as much as possible, to the entire extent of our being. That's what it is, I believe, to be truly human.

What comes through, beyond mistaking, is that this ivory-tower writer, this tortured "hermit" of Croisset who longed to write "a book about nothing," was a "large" nature, with a huge capacity for affection and enjoyment.

He was also a tender-hearted man. He was upset when Sainte-Beuve, reviewing *Salammbo*, spoke of him as sadistic, and he gave a measured defense of that book—certainly the most bloodthirsty, if not the bleakest, of his novels—in terms of his own idiosyncratic version of "sympathy": "I even think I have been less hard on humanity in *Salammbo* than in *Madame Bovary*. The curiosity, the love which impelled me toward lost religions and people has something moral in itself, surely?" It puts one in mind of another statement, more famous and

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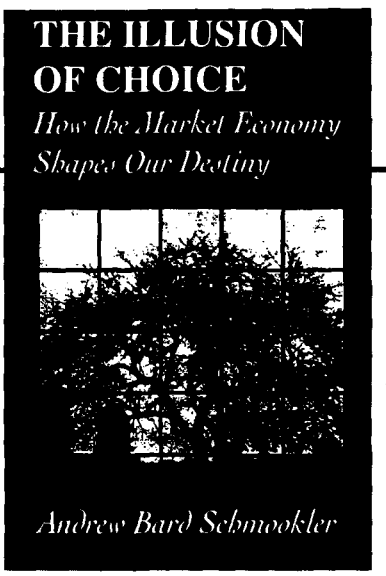
more compelling, of his artistic credo: "Rich or poor, victors or vanquished, I admit none of all that. I want neither love, nor hate, nor pity, nor anger. As for sympathy, that's different. One can never have enough of it." In "sympathy" is included that refusal to leave himself out of the equation, his self-identification with the "absurd" Madame Bovary and with Bouvard and Pecuchet, which is the convincing sign of his good faith. In virtue of it one can respect even his dealings with the term "bourgeois" (a source of bad faith and obfuscation if ever there was one). With Flaubert "bourgeois" has lost almost all real reference to the social situation and has become a purely ethical category. It represents the enemy in himself that, like St. Anthony, it is his life task to combat.

The warm qualities of his heart were what made him attractive to George Sand, herself an admirably "large" nature. Theirs was an improbable friendship, for in the days before he knew her Flaubert had detested her work: he told his mistress Louise Colet, in his scabrous way, that it smelled of leukorrhea. All the more endearing, then, is the ardent, tender and exhilarating comradeship that developed between him and his more famous and successful contemporary. It began in 1863, through a laudatory review by her of *Salammbo*, and lasted, with only minor hitches, until her death in 1873. It was agreed between them that each belonged to both sexes, and she became his *cher maître* and then his *chère maître*. Whatever he might think of her novels and plays, he recognized in her an extraordinary success in the art of living; and she, who considered his mode of living quite grotesque, responded as warmly to his largeness.

What struck other literary friends of this "priest of art," as he called himself, this victim of unconquerable ennui, was how much noise he made. "He was enormous, dazzling, resounding," wrote Anatole France. Once, at dinner with friends in Paris, he spoke of nothing but how a theater manager had invited him to rewrite a play by his dead friend Louis Bouilhet. "He bellowed with joy, he was enchanted," wrote George Sand; "nothing else existed for him in the universe. He never stopped talking and didn't let Turgenev get a word in, much less Goncourt." He would make the sensitive Edmond Goncourt's head ache, and the Goncourt brothers warmed to him most when he proclaimed, in his extravagant fashion, that all great artists needed to be sick. More often they complained of his vulgarity and the commonplaceness of his ideas. "At bottom," they noted peevishly, "he is a provincial and a poseur. His loutish jokes lack charm."

When we consider this joyful human abundance of Flaubert's, and the intense joy that, sometimes at least, art could give him, when a sentence or a paragraph decided to come right, and if we add to this the greatness of what he actually achieved in art, though it left him "choking" with a hundred things that, because of the rigors of his artistic method, he was unable to say, it does not quite make sense to speak of him as "a profoundly unhappy man." It is worth quoting that passage from Troyat at some length, for it reveals his own limitations and raises a problem about biography generally:

> When he analyzed himself, he was obliged to observe that he was a strange animal, bristling with contradictions. His loathing for the bourgeois was all the stronger because he felt himself to be bourgeois to the bone, with his love of order, comfort and hierarchy. He condemned all governments but couldn't stand the excesses of the rabble when they dared to defy them. Curled up in his downy nest in Croisset, he dreamed of journeys to distant lands and had made a few that bore witness to his courage and endurance. The sworn enemy of priests, he was attracted by religious problems. Obsessed with feminine charm, he refused to become attached to any woman. A revolutionary in art, he was conservative in daily life. Hungering for friendship, he lived most of the time apart from



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his fellow men. And these perpetual conflicts made him a profoundly unhappy man. When he looked over his past—which he did more than ever now—he could see only work, bereavements and solitude. In his eagerness to write he had forgotten to live: Hadn't that been a mistake? But no, the love of art excused everything, justified everything.

This, you might say, is Troyat's exercise in that *style indirect libre* of which Flaubert himself was such a master—the style in which, behind past tenses and third-person narration, one half-hears the words of an actual speaker. But then it is an unsatisfactory exercise, slipping every so often into sentimental commonplace. We have a standard, after all, by which to measure it: Flaubert himself, in his letters, is continually stating his "contradictions" in prose of extraordinary panache and vigor. He is, he discovers, a man determined to fulfill himself utterly, at least by way of dreams, but not a man born to enjoy; a man with a passionate craving for riches and luxury, but a total contempt for the means of obtaining them; a man determined to understand everything, but at the cost of becoming detached from everything—so completely that the most everyday matters can grip him with amazement.

These paradoxes, as he well knew, were his true, living subject matter as a writer, and to go on exploring them was all that could be asked of him. It did not occur to him, as seems to be the drift of Troyat's version, that they could ever be shelved or resolved. One detects the same false note in Troyat when he writes, concerning a moment when Flaubert is feeling out of pocket and despondent, "As always, there was only one consolation, work. Bouvard and Pecuchet were waiting for him in Croisset. Once again, he would try to forget the world in their company." The obsessive realism of *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, one cannot help objecting, was a very strange way of "forgetting the world." It was, on the other hand, a way of forgetting himself, and here we come to the large subject of Flaubert's legacy.

"It is a delicious thing to write," he wrote to Louise Colet at the time of *Madame Bovary*, "to be no longer *yourself* but to move in an entire universe of your own creating." One has heard other writers saying much the same, but for Flaubert it had an extra significance. For the fruit of his traumatic crisis and breakdown in early manhood (whether we regard the cause as epilepsy or merely neurosis) seems to have been an especially strong sense of his own absurdity. "I love good sense above all, perhaps because I have none," he writes to Colet in 1846. And to his friend Alfred Le Poittevin he writes, conversely and a year or two earlier, that common sense is simply not his sphere and would do him harm. "Normal, regular, rich, hearty copulation would take me too much out of myself, disturb my peace. I would be returning to active truth in the physical sense, to common sense in short, and that has been bad for me every time I've tried it." In his *Tentation de Saint Antoine*, it is disastrous farce when the skittish Chimera attempts to couple with the heavy-limbed, slow-moving Sphinx.

Closely connected with this conviction, and most likely with roots in the same crisis, was a vision, always ready to afflict this ebullient and passionate man, of sheer indifference. "I have within me, deep inside, a fundamental, intimate, bitter and never-ending ennui that prevents me from enjoying anything and that fills my soul to bursting." That his "self" was, in his eyes, particularly absurd was evidently a good motive for escaping from it. It is this sense of absurdity (rather than, as Sartre would have it in *The Family Idiot*, self-hatred—"hatred of nature, hatred of the worker and of man, hatred of oneself," as representative of the "bourgeois") that seems most central to Flaubert's art. Thus the famous doctrine of "impersonality" ("assuming the role of the dead man in the game of writing," as Foucault puts it)—a creed that Flaubert elaborated with such brilliance and force and that was an inspiration later to the whole "modernist" movement—could be said to have its historic source in a quirk of personal psychology.

One is aware of the quirk when reading Flaubert's letters to George Sand. In *L'Education sentimentale* he proved himself a more advanced historian than his professional-historian contemporaries, showing a profounder grasp of the nature of causation, and presenting a more sophisticated model of the link between the personal, the social and the political. Yet the same man, commenting to George Sand and others on the Franco-Prussian War or the Commune, frequently talked the most appalling nonsense—careless and impenitent nonsense, amounting to no more than loud cursing of the "stupidity" of everything and everyone. He was addicted to the doctrine that government can only properly be performed by "mandarins," that the only salvation lies in a "legitimate aristocracy" (of which, presumably, he was to be an honored member). It is a theory that, even when voiced by Plato or Yeats, strikes one as the nadir of political thinking, but Flaubert gives it an especially absurd accent. George Sand would tell him not to be ridiculous, and one can detect that he knew very well that he was being so.

These were things that he was "choking" with because he could not get them into his novels; but, as he was well aware, the rule or artistic instinct that excluded them was right. "In short, I try to think well in order to write well," he wrote to George Sand, defensively. "But it is to write well that is my goal, I don't deny it." "Style," his preoccupation with tenses and unwanted assonance and the mot juste, was by no means a mere dilettantism or ivory-tower amusement, it was a strenuous intellectual discipline. "Whenever I discover a disagreeable assonance or a repetition in one of my sentences, I can be sure that I'm floundering around in something false.... The word is never

The Context of a Necktie Quilt, Silk and Satins, 1940s

Wood walls.
The death of a necktie-wearer in the war.
No other shiny objects
(mirrors).
Any kind of sky.
Many circular possessions,
bowls and jars.
A well, a pump.

Or night. The time of removing
the body from the clothes
and lying across the rep,
the imprint
of stripes—urbane,
civilized, their minimal
embellishment
congregated,
more
than a
Senateful.

Strange gender-object.
The context then—the dark suit of sleep.
The context—lightning.
I send it back.

SANDRA MCPHERSON

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lacking when one is in the possession of the idea."

Proust fully realized this point, writing of Flaubert that

> by the entirely new and personal use that he made of the past definite, the imperfect and the present participle, of certain pronouns and certain prepositions, he renewed our vision of things almost as much as Kant with his Categories, his theories of knowledge and of the reality of the external world.

It may be added that Flaubert's practice of eliminating, so far as possible, all adverbs and all conjunctions (or, on the rare occasion of employing them, putting them in a "wrong" place) has a direct connection with his historical vision. The habit reached its peak in *L'Education sentimentale*, and what it expresses, or mimes, is that the chain of causation in a narrative should be palpable enough to convince us without an author's "but"s and "though"s and "because"s—verbal props that impose a single line of causation on what is really multiple. We are left to fill in the gaps between Flaubert's brief sentences and "atomic" propositions, and here the work of historical thinking begins. In face of that inept phrase "the classic realist novel," now making the rounds, it is worth remembering to what degree "realism," in its original form, was bound up with questions of syntax and word order and parts of speech.

In *Early Writings* Robert Berry Griffin gives us, in translation, the best (which is about half) of Flaubert's schoolboy experiments in writing. It is a valuable enterprise and biographically very illuminating. In general, though, these cheerful exercises in the Byronic-visionary, the macabre (*Rage and Impotence: An Unwholesome Story for Sensitive Nerves and Devout Souls*) and up-to-date satire (*A Lecture on Natural History—Genus: Clerk*) do not amount to a great deal. The most substantial is the medieval mystery play *Smarh*, the young Flaubert's tribute to *Faust*. Some writers of fiction (one thinks of Forster) arrive at their chosen plot very early on, and it suffices them throughout their writing life. For Flaubert, evidently, his master plot was the "Temptation," in the Bosch or Brueghel sense—the sense in which God "tempts" Abraham as well as the one in which the Devil tempts Christ. It defined his own experience for him better than any other, and it served as a pattern for *Madame Bovary* and *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, as it did for *Smarh* and *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*.

In *Smarh*, Satan comes to earth disguised as a Greek doctor and, interrupting the hermit Smarh as he is blessing his flock, suggests that sages such as themselves should share the treasures of their knowledge. (While the two converse, Satan's ribald companion Yuk improves the hour by putting lustful thoughts into the head of one of Smarh's disciples.) Satan takes Smarh on a flight through outer space, showing him the pettiness and pitifulness of earth, until his mind snaps like a reed, "smashed by the tempest of infinity." Returned to earth, Satan shows Smarh the ever spreading empire of evil. They observe a Savage abandoning his joyful Eden to enter the city. They enter a city themselves, by night, and witness a king tormented by the Seven Deadly Sins, at which Satan grows bored, so Yuk stages for him "A Short Bourgeois Comedy." Yuk urinates on a church, which (in a fine Hugo-like fantasia) tells of its own dereliction—even the gargoyles are planning to desert—and finally the church falls before Smarh's grief-stricken eyes.

Satan urges Smarh, at all costs, to dream, and Smarh duly indulges in a dream-orgy of lust and wantonness and then in one of empire and blood. It is then revealed that he is in fact a nineteenth-century poet, going through a dark night of the soul. Emerging newborn from his travail, he is about to embrace the angel Truth, when Yuk, who is "eternal truth, the clown, the grotesque, the ugly" (Jonathan Culler has called him "the God of language"), intervenes and kisses Truth to death. In a postscript, supposedly written a year later, a "friend" excoriates Flaubert's undisciplined rhapsody, remarking: "Do you know what I like best about your work? It's this very page, which next year will seem to me as stupid as the rest and will prompt another series of bitter reflections."

It is worth recalling that, at the end of Flaubert's great *Tentation de Saint Antoine*, written some thirty-odd years later, the sorely tried St. Anthony, unlike Smarh, at last succeeds in embracing Truth—in the shape of Darwinism. It is an odd and wonderfully unexpected denouement, altogether at odds with the earlier version of the *Tentation*, published in 1856, in which the Devil has the last laugh. Now, in this later version, having overcome Death and "Luxury," St. Anthony takes the initiative and boldly pushes his own inquiry into the mind-and-matter problem. He studies, at first with alarm, a pageant of monsters—the Astomi, fabulous Indians without mouths; the Nisnas, who share an eye, a cheek and a heart between them; and so on.

But then, turning his eyes to the ground, he loses his fear. His gaze grows microscopic, and, with ecstatic joy, he catches sight of the *moneron*, or primordial cell, as described in the Darwinist Ernt Haeckel's *History of Creation*—a pinheaded globule of mucus, impatient to propagate into more extravagant forms than any the Devil has shown him, indeed encapsulating the whole evolutionary process. Oddly, this triumphant embracing of materialism is sometimes referred to by commentators as his "defeat." Which indeed it is, in terms of the fable, and Flaubert used the word himself in speaking of it to Edmond Goncourt, but evidently only in the sense of a *felix culpa*, or "fortunate fall."

P. N. FURBANK is the author most recently of *Diderot: A Critical Biography* (Knopf).

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Youngsters

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION makes me feel old. I'm roughly the same age as President Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice President Gore, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, Labor Secretary Robert Reich and economic czar Robert Rubin. Yet there's a generation gap between me and them. There's an ideological gap, too, but I don't think it's the cause of the problem. Nor is Clinton's lifestyle. I love McDonald's (the coffee especially). I don't jog (too boring), but I play racquetball almost as often as he runs. Moreover, the top echelon of the administration is filled with extremely likable people, most of them, anyway. Still, I identify with the feeling expressed by a veteran White House reporter in my age bracket. Encountering the Clinton administration, he said, is like returning home and finding that your kids have broken into the liquor cabinet. Makes you feel old.

WHAT'S BEHIND THIS, I THINK, IS memory lapse—the Clinton administration's, not mine. Like hundreds of journalists, I've been covering national affairs in Washington for about two decades. Things happened in Washington during those years. Initiatives were tried. Policies were implemented. Some worked, some didn't. My point is that lots of reporters wrote and talked about all this and remember it well. The Clintonites seem ahistorical, recalling only selective snatches of what went on here pre-Clinton. They reinvent the wheel every Monday morning. They boast, for example, of the lavish attention Clinton has paid to Congress, as if other presidents never thought of doing that. They trumpet dramatic cuts in the White House staff, oblivious to the fact that this is a routine gesture for a new president. They talk about aggressively using "regional media," not Washington correspondents, to get their message out. Heck, the Nixon White House pioneered this, and even a klutz like President Bush did a pretty good job of exploiting the non-Washington press. Lot of good it did him.

THE MOST STRIKING INSTANCE OF memory lapse involves what Clinton, in a formal announcement, called "a national performance review." This, he said, is "a historic step in reforming the federal government." The intention is "to redesign, to reinvent, to reinvigorate the entire national government." Clinton insisted performance reviewers "will challenge the basic assumptions of every program, asking, does it work, does it provide quality service, does it encourage innovation and reward hard work?" They'll ask federal employees to "help." They'll get advice from the public through an 800 number or by letter. And so on. Gore was more hyperbolic about the review than Clinton was: "I want to ask all of you to mark this date: President Clinton is starting a revolution in government right here and now." (It was March 3.) I'll be happy to remember that date if only the Clinton team would recall that similar process reforms have been tried before, and come to naught. The Carter administration employed "zero-based budgeting" and "sunset" provisions. The sun never set on a single program to which these reforms were applied. I'd like to think Clinton and Gore were entirely cynical in announcing the program review. But I'm afraid they believed every word. "It isn't written anywhere that government can't be thrifty or flexible or entrepreneurial," Clinton said. Of course, there are no known examples of thrifty, flexible or entrepreneurial government, either.

I DON'T FAULT CLINTONITES FOR lifestyle stories about how hip and young they are ("not just the usual gray suits but also women in pants, tieless men in sweaters and the occasional diamond ear stud," according to *Time*). And having Annie Leibovitz photograph the whole White House crew for *Vanity Fair*, who could refuse that? From my vantage point, the Clintonites *are* hip and young. Nothing wrong with that. But they aren't hip and young in quite the way that's touted. "The Clinton administration is certainly extending the limits of where official Washington lives," *The New York Times* said. "Few Clinton staff members have been so venturesome as to live outside the city's northwest quadrant, but ..." Whoa. Wait a minute. How can they be extending the limits if they're clustered in the largely white, affluent, upper-middle-class section of Washington? Answer: they can't. This is a nice part of town, a ghetto for the meritocracy. But living there isn't evidence that Clintonites are, as the *Times* claimed, "outwards in outlook." Just the opposite.

I HAVE A THEORY ABOUT WHY Clinton has gotten such negative press coverage as president. Partly it's because the Washington media is jaded, remembering things Clinton doesn't. But there's a bigger reason. The reporters assigned to Clinton are mostly the same ones who covered Bush. They pounded Bush throughout 1992—unfairly on economic matters, fairly on other issues—but watched Clinton get far gentler treatment from the reporters following his campaign. Some of the White House regulars were appalled at the warm and chummy relationship between Clinton and the press. Now the White House reporters who savaged Bush have Clinton in their clutches, and they're not about to let him off easy. Small wonder that Clinton has done all he can to keep reporters at bay. There's no chit-chat anymore. He's courteous, but aloof.

THE DOWNSIDE OF STIFF-ARMING the press is that reporters bear a grudge against Clinton and elevate it to constitutional status. The White House media's grievance is the absence of press conferences. Sure, Clinton answers a few questions after announcements and at photo-ops. That's not sufficient, they say. By circumventing the press, as Reagan often did, he's avoiding the sort of scrutiny the First Amendment has in mind. Or so the complaint goes. This is merely special pleading. Reporters are losing a power struggle with Clinton over what's news at the White House. They want to choose the story to cover. Clinton wants them to cover his message. He doesn't want to be diverted by their queries about other issues. By brushing the press aside, he leaves reporters little but his message to cover. On this, Clinton and his entourage understand recent history only too well. They've learned a lesson from the past five or six presidencies: being bullied by the White House press is harmful to your political health. The public doesn't mind Clinton's avoidance of Washington reporters. So long as he's out and around, holding town meetings, clearly not hiding, they're satisfied. Besides, the questions he gets at town meetings are less predictable than those asked by White House reporters. If I were in Clinton's shoes, I'd treat the press the same way. Just thinking about it, I feel younger already.

FRED BARNES

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

TV Chastity Belt

Why do our kids do so badly in school? Lots of people will tell you it's because they spend too much time in front of a TV set. And it's true that the numbers are staggering. In 1990, one in four 9-year-olds spent six or more hours, seven days a week, watching TV. That's more than most adults spend at work and certainly more than these kids spent in school. It's also true that kids who watch lots of TV have poor test scores. What should we do?

Some people talk about parents' cracking down, but a Miami entrepreneur has invented a far more ingenious solution. It's a gadget that rations children's television time and shuts off the set when a kid has used up his allotment.

Here's how it works. The parent enters Johnny's weekly ration of TV time into a black box that controls the TV power supply. To turn on the TV, the kid needs to punch in his four-digit ID number, and as he listens to MTV or plays a game of Nintendo, a clock in the black box debits his account. When he's used up his time, the set dies, and it's no more TV until next week. The gadget can also black out whole time periods—for instance, between midnight and 6 a.m. so a kid can't sneak out of bed to watch an X-rated film.

This TV chastity belt has gotten enthusiastic notices in the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe* and even *TV Guide*. Testimonials talk about how it has restored tranquillity to family life because parents don't have to say *no* all the time and how it teaches kids to budget their time and make judgments about what they really want to watch. Above all, of course, it ensures that a youngster's weekly ration of television does not depend on his own discipline or his own self-control.

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Gadgets like this are familiar in the adult world, too. Look at the self-locking refrigerator device for people who are desperate to lose weight or the cigarette case that can be programmed to release only a certain number of cigarettes a day. You can also see it at the highest levels of the U.S. government in the Gramm-Rudman bill and the proposed balanced budget amendment. Both are based on the idea that people in Congress can't keep themselves from overspending, and what they need is a gadget that makes it impossible for them to lose control.

But before we put this difficulty in saying *no* down to human nature—which is the same thing as saying that youngsters can't do anything about it—there's another angle. Kids in Japan, Germany, France, Sweden and Holland also have TV sets, but as far as I know, there's been no wave of companies forming in these countries to market TV chastity belts. Their kids watch far less television, on average, than American youngsters. They also achieve at much higher levels. How come?

Most adults do what they must in order to get what they want, and kids are no different. Youngsters in these other countries know that if they want to get into university, it's not enough to squeak through high school. They must study hard and pass a demanding examination. As for kids who are going right from school to work, they know that the courses they have taken, the grades they have gotten and their success on examinations will determine the kind of job they get.

American kids see no good reason to turn off the TV and do their schoolwork. A high school graduate who wants to go to college, and can swing it financially, will be able to find some school to accept him, no matter how little he knows and how poor his grades. It's about the same for youngsters who are going right to work. Top companies don't hire new graduates—they prefer workers in their twenties who already have experience. And the companies that do hire new graduates seldom ask for a transcript or care what kind of record a kid has.

Too much television may lead to poor school performance, but we are not going to take care of the problem by locking up the TV sets. Doing so might induce a handful of kids to start paying attention to their schoolwork, but the rest will find other ways of occupying their time.

We must connect student achievement with what happens after graduation—with getting into college or getting a good job—and we must make the stakes visible to our students. Until we do that, we will not get the kind of improvement in student performance that we want and need—no matter how ingenious and successful we are at turning off the tube.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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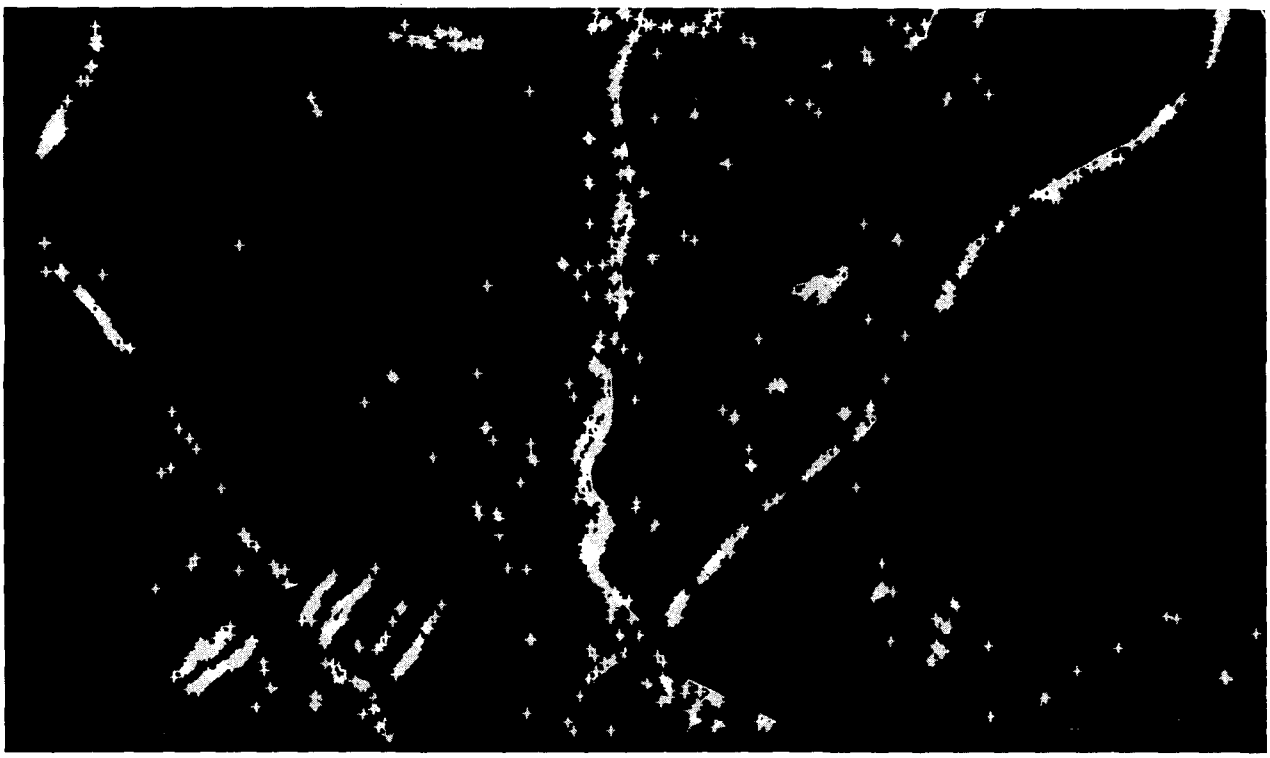

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